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The Journal of Performing Arts Leadership in Higher Education is a peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the enrichment of leadership in the performing arts in higher education.

Goals

1. To promote scholarship applicable to performing arts leadership
2. To provide juried research in the field of performing arts leadership
3. To disseminate information, ideas and experiences in performing arts leadership

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WHY WON'T ARTS LEADERS TALK ABOUT WOMEN?

Women in the arts workforce continue to confront an array of challenges that exist due to the results of a system whose design never considered women in the first place.

In the research brief "*Artists in the Workforce: Selected Demographic Characteristics Prior to COVID-19*," the National Endowment for the Arts divides the creative professions workforce into 11 occupations, with certain industries having a larger percentage of women in the workforce: 77 percent of all dancers/choreographers and nearly 60 percent of writers/authors are women. Meanwhile, men make up more than 72 percent of architects - the highest paying and most male occupation - and over 60 percent of musicians. However, the most interesting detail is that as the percentage of women decreases in each occupation, the median earnings of artists generally increase. Women not only earn less cents on the male-earned dollar across the board, but industries that are particularly dominated by women earn significantly less money altogether (with the exception of writers/authors and designers).

This financial burden worsens as women become mothers. The U.S. is one of six countries without a national paid leave policy, and in the unpredictable industry of dance, music, and acting (which all earn less than the entire U.S. labor force and yet rely heavily on one's ability to be "readily available for performance"), many women feel that they will be penalized for their choice to pursue motherhood. In a *Sofi and Modern Fertility* study about the leading reasons why family was put on hold, 60 percent of its respondents did not believe they had enough money saved, 51 percent wanted to earn a higher salary, and 35 percent were willing to delay starting a family until they reached a certain job title. There is a fear that if women stop along their career journey to have children, they will be overlooked for a promotion. For instance, *gal-dem*, a media publication dedicated to "telling the stories of people of color from marginalized genders" cites a survey by Cornell University which found that job applicants had twice the opportunity to receive an interview if they did not reference children during the application process. Author Ray Sung of *gal-dem* writes, "The general consensus appears to be that the birth of a child somehow makes women less reliable, leading those in positions of power to bar their access to opportunities by failing to consider them in the first place." Sung's article showcases more stories about women in music feeling that their career must suffer in order to have children.

According to the Treasury Department, over 60 percent of families who need childcare cannot afford it. Today, the average family with at least one child under age five would need to devote approximately 13 percent of family income to pay for childcare. This means that infant childcare costs families an average of \$11,000 per year, which exceeds the price of public college in

33 states. Furthermore, less than 20 percent of children eligible for one of the largest federal assistance programs for low-income families, the Child Care and Development Fund, actually receive funding.

Childcare is not only unaffordable for most American families, it is also inaccessible. Between December 2019 and March 2021, nearly 16,000 childcare facilities shut down permanently and 100,000 workers have left the industry for better-paying jobs. The Center for American Progress describes a childcare desert as “a place where there are three or more children for each licensed childcare slot.” More than 80 percent of the counties in their study sampling 40 percent of the U.S. would be classified as an infant and toddler childcare desert. Childcare deserts occur more often in low and middle-income areas, making families in these areas spend more on childcare despite having less access. Childcare deserts can particularly effect on the dance industry as the dancer/choreographer occupation consists of a majority young, female, and non-white workforce with the least amount of education and lowest median annual earnings. Similarly, the childcare workforce is nearly 93 percent female, disproportionately women of color, and is among the lowest-paying professions for degree-holders. The lack of childcare options epitomizes intersectionality as it reinforces the racial and economic hardships for women of color within the performing arts and the childcare workforce. Furthermore, this intersectionality breeds an endless cycle of poverty from two industries who desperately need each other. Female artists of color need childcare; however, they are the least likely demographic to afford it. As a result, childcare service is no longer needed, which puts many childcare workers at a position to receive even lower pay or to leave the workforce altogether. In the end, both industries are composed of the most vulnerable demographic, and when one industry fails, the other is severely impacted.

The U.S. childcare workforce is down 5.5 percent from pre-pandemic levels, with 57,600 employees still missing from the sector since February 2020 (CSCCE). One of main reasons for the absence of childcare workers is the unsustainable low pay and limited benefits. May 2021 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics cites the median wage of a childcare worker at just \$13.22 per hour, or about \$27,490 per year. This salary is just above the 2021 federal poverty level for a family of four (\$26,500). The Buffett Early Childhood Institute created the Nebraska Early Childhood Workforce Survey to examine early childhood teacher turnover rates in Nebraska and found a 26 percent annual turnover rate among childcare teachers, compared with a rate of 15 percent for pre-K teachers. Fifty-eight percent of childcare administrators cited higher salaries as the main reason teachers left compared with twenty-one percent of pre-K administrators.

The United States is an outlier amongst other developed countries when it comes to spending money on childcare and early education. Ranked at #35 out of 37 by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, the U.S. spends less than \$500 a year for children under two compared to the \$12,800 spent on children ages five to eighteen. Other rich countries spend, on average, \$14,000 per year for toddler's care using heavily subsidized child care programs. The United States' lack of commitment to funding adequate and accessible childcare leaves many families struggling with the trade-off between spending a large sum of money on childcare, settling for lower-quality care arrangements, and/or reducing work hours.

With these childcare concerns and limitations, it is unsurprising that many mothers are forced to quit their jobs entirely. The fifth annual State of Motherhood survey by Motherly states that "46 percent of currently unemployed millennial and Gen Z moms who left the workforce in 2021 cite childcare issues as the top reason why they changed employers or altered employment status altogether last year."

The loss of parents in the workforce has devastating effects on the parents, employers, and the U.S. economy at large. Not only do parents suffer from lost wages when leaving the workforce, the Center for American Progress states that parents who re-enter the workforce after interrupting their career can lose up to four times their annual salary from their lifetime earnings for each year out of the workforce. According to economists Claudia Goldin and Larry Katz, women with a college education saw a 41 percent decrease in earnings for those with an MBA, 29 percent for those with a JD or PhD, and 15 percent for those with an MD after an 18 month break in work¹. Parents who are unable to work full time also lose access to other employment benefits such as healthcare insurance and retirement plans. On the employer end, workforce losses can lead to struggles with productivity and high turn-over rates. Working with four states, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation estimated that childcare-related absences and employee turnover cost employers between \$375 and \$500 per adult of working age. Overall, The U.S. economy loses an estimated \$57 billion annually because of childcare problems.

A potential resolution to the current childcare crisis could have been President Biden's Build Back Better Act, which initially proposed 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave to all U.S. employees. According to Vice President Harris, the act aimed to allow families to put no more than seven percent of their income into childcare for young children (via subsidies and tax credits), to push for universal preschool for all three- and four-year-olds, and to expand tax credits for children (CBS NEWS). However, the Act's proposed 12 week

¹ Goldin, Claudia, and Lawrence F. Katz. 2008. "Transitions: Career and Family Life Cycles of the Educational Elite." *American Economic Review* 98 (2): 363–69; Goldin, Claudia. 2014. "A Grand Gender Convergence: Its Last Chapter." *American Economic Review* 104 (4): 1091–1119.

plan was cut down to four weeks to lower costs in November 2021, and has now been officially rejected. Despite the plan's federal rejection, some states have taken initiative to institute their own paid family leave and/or paid sick leave policies.

As of 2023, 13 states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave programs and 14 states and D.C. have enacted paid sick leave programs. Unfortunately, the state-by-state legislature of these programs means millions of American workers are left without a safety net. According to the National Partnership for Women & Families, nearly 28 million workers are forced to work without paid sick leave. The U.S. currently offers up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave through the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993; however, this act still excludes about 44 percent of U.S. workers, particularly part-time workers and small business owners (which encapsulates many dance artists).

In October 2021, two surveys, CBS News/YouGov Poll and Politico/Morning Consult Poll, analyzed the public's support for paid leave in reference to Biden's Build Back Better Act. They found that paid leave was supported by 70 percent of U.S. adults and workers. A national paid leave policy was particularly important to women, who shoulder a disproportionate amount of family caregiving responsibilities, and people of color, who often have less accessibility to paid family and medical leave, but are more likely to hold multigenerational care duties. The Politico/ Morning Consult survey found that paid leave is especially important to women (25 percent), including Democratic women (28 percent), independent women (25 percent), Black voters (24 percent), and people in the West (24 percent). The poll also reveals that 82 percent of Democrats, 81 percent of Biden voters, 82 percent of Hispanic voters, and 72 percent of Black voters supported Build Back Better's \$1.75 trillion in investments. Similarly, the CBS News survey states that 90 percent of Democrats, 89 percent of Biden voters, 84 percent of Black adults, and 81 percent of Hispanic adults would support paid leave. Despite the clear demand for paid leave amongst people of color, the people who currently are more likely to receive paid leave are affluent, well educated, and White. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data indicate that about 47 percent of White parents, 41 percent of Black parents, and just 23 percent of Hispanic parents have access to paid leave. The American childcare system is essentially asking the systematically least equipped demographic to sacrifice the most for adequate child care.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) surveyed 3,129 employers and cited that the number of organizations offering paid maternity leave dropped from 53 percent in 2020 to 35 percent in 2022. The offering of paid paternity leave dropped from 44 percent to 27 percent. Paid leave for adoptive and foster parents also declined significantly, dropping from 36 percent to 28 percent and 28 percent to 22 percent respectively. SHRM researcher Derrick Scheetz

states that paid leave benefits increased in 2020 as a direct response to the pandemic; however, “now that many businesses have returned to a more typical way of operating, employers seem to be dialing back on expanded parental-leave opportunities” (*SHRM*).

Paid leave provides essential health and economic benefits, including greater labor force participation, increased income for women and caregivers, increased stability for small businesses, improved mental health, and enhances household well-being (*New America*). Unattainably expensive childcare results in employment declines for mothers. Thus, offering paid leave allows more women to remain in the workforce. In *Pay Matters*, a report by the Center for Women and Work, “women who report taking paid leave are more likely to be working 9 to 12 months after a child’s birth than are those who report taking no leave at all.” Furthermore, paid leave increases women’s earnings. *Pay Matters* adds that “women who report leaves of 30 or more days are 54 percent more likely to report wage increases in the year following the child’s birth than are women who take no leave at all.” These two benefits create great economic security for women and their families, especially when women are the sole or primary breadwinners for two-thirds of families with children.

Approximately 70 percent of small businesses consistently support national paid leave, and in states with the longest standing paid-leave policies (California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and New York), “small business employers overwhelmingly report positive or neutral effects on productivity, morale, loyalty, and the ease of dealing with employees’ leaves” (*New America*). In regards to mental health, women are more subject to depressive symptoms and marital and self-esteem problems when they are unable to take the necessary time off from work (Bullinger, L. R., *Journal of Health Economics*, Vol. 66, 2019; Feldman, R., et al., *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 2004). These problems are particularly present in women who return to work in less than two months and can be long standing, as women who took a shorter maternity leave report more psychological distress, even a few years later. Further research suggests that underprivileged families may benefit most from parental leave policies, reporting better birth outcomes, including fewer early term births, possibly owing to decreased stress during pregnancy (Stearns, J., *Journal of Health Economics*, Vol. 43, 2015). One of the key benefits of paid leave is the positive impact it has on children. Paid leave can allow both parents to be home, which eases the demand of parenting by equalizing caregiving responsibilities and fostering bonding with their children. Parent–child bonding in the first months and years of life is crucial for the development of healthy cognitive, behavioral, and socioemotional skills and can even dictate mental health over the life span (Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R., “Attachment Theory,” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Personality Psychology*, 2020).

Investing in children, families, and mothering is a long-term commitment to improved public health, our nation's emotional well-being, and demonstrated positive outcomes for the economy, working Americans, and future generations. A vital source for such investments could be national, regional, and state/jurisdictional arts organizations, which already allocate a vast amount of funding for artistic grants and programs. Many of today's programs center on artist development, arts education, arts accessibility, community cultivation, arts and health, and arts/culture preservation. These programs help to stimulate creativity, extend arts participation into ethnically diverse communities, and enhance the quality of life all the while serving as essential economic drivers. In 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis cited the U.S. arts and culture sector as a \$876.7 billion industry that represented 4.2 percent of the nation's GDP, which was a larger share of the economy than transportation, construction, and tourism. **In knowing that the arts are vital to the economy and women comprise a large portion of the arts (especially dance), the failure to support women and their access to sufficient childcare is a failure to support the arts.** The U.S. national, regional, and state/jurisdictional arts organizations have one unified purpose of advocating for greater arts support, but many of them lack research or resources specifically on the hardships of women artists (including inequitable pay and leadership disparities), parental leave, and/or childcare solutions.

The following federal initiatives are some great tools to combat the childcare crisis, and we strongly encourage arts organizations to advocate and ensure the implementation of these policies within their communities.

1. Four bills that would expand Family and Medical Leave Act coverage and broaden protections for American families
 - a. The Job Protection Act – extends FMLA protections to millions of vulnerable workers by covering small businesses, part-time employees, and employees who have worked at a job for less than a year. The FMLA currently excludes many small businesses and 44 percent of the workforce due to three strict limitations: a 50-employee threshold for workplaces, a requirement of 1,250 hours of work for employees in a single workplace, and a mandatory 12-month employment.
 - b. The Family Medical Leave Modernization Act – redefines “family” under the FMLA's terms to include domestic partners, in-laws, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, adult children, and other significant relationships. This act guarantees that other family caregivers are able to provide for their loved ones without risking their employment.

Junyla Silmon, author, Isabelle Ramey, advisor

- c. The ESP Family Leave Act – expands FMLA benefits to specifically meet the needs of educational support professionals, like teacher’s assistants and school custodians.
 - d. The Comprehensive Paid Leave for Federal Employees Act – converts 12 weeks of unpaid leave into paid leave for federal employees.
2. Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (effective June 2023) – This act requires employers with 15 or more employees to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified employees and job applicants with temporary physical or mental limitations due to pregnancy, childbirth or related conditions. Workers who are able to continue working during their pregnancies and employers who are able to retain their workforce will both benefit from the availability of reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers.
 3. Protections for Nursing Mothers (PUMP Act) – The PUMP act requires that employers provide a reasonable break time and a private place (shielded from view and free from interruption) for an employee to express breast milk at the employee’s discretion for one year after the child’s birth.
 4. Expand refundable tax credits – In 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act temporarily expanded three tax credits: Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC). All three credit expansions were extremely helpful for many low-income families and played vital roles in the large poverty decline and reduced food insecurity of 2021. However, since the expiration of these expanded tax credits, poverty rates have spiked by 41 percent (especially among Black and Latinx children) and food insufficiency has increased by 14 percent amongst families who stopped receiving advanced CTC payments in December 2021. Policymakers should focus on restoring the tax credit expansions as extending these credits to low-earning families can improve the economic well-being of women and families, increase tax code fairness, reduce poverty, and foster racial and gender equity.

In addition to strongly advocating for local, state, or national policy enactments, arts organizations have the power and bandwidth to encourage change from individual artists themselves. Childcare solutions do not have to be activated solely from the top-down. Advancement can be sparked at the lowest level and make strides amongst communities who lean into their support from one another.

YOU can spark the change by...

- Addressing the gender pay gap and the large gender disparity within arts leadership. This can be done through enforcing pay transparency, applying protections to women who experience pay discrimination, raising wages, and starting initiatives to bring more women into leadership positions.
- Supporting women of color in the arts by acknowledging their unique challenges and successes and further creating distinguished opportunities that support female artists of color in leadership roles.
- Offering more flexible work hours to accommodate varying childcare schedules.
- Instilling parent-friendly workplaces, which can look like implementing lactation rooms, on-site daycare, or even creating mobile childcare options during touring obligations or out-of-state residencies.
- Debunking outdated myths around the female physique and its capabilities. Every woman's body is different and should not be held captive to the stereotype that it is permanently weaker or produces less valuable work after having children.

...

Junyla Silmon, a native of Canton, MS, is a 2022 summa cum laude graduate from Montclair State University, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in dance performance and a minor in business administration. As a performing artist, she has worked with Susan Marshall, Roderick George, Yusha-Marie Sorzano, and Kayla Farrish, among others. In 2023, Junyla checked in as the newest resident of Sleep No More at the McKittrick Hotel. She is also a company member of Company SBB//Stefanie Batten Bland, Accent Dance NYC, and Freespace Dance. As a choreographer, her work, "[EK]+[OH]," was presented at the 2022 Upsurge Dance Festival. Beyond dance performance, Junyla serves as a senior research consultant for Dance Data Project® (DDP).

Isabelle Ramey, originally from Pittsburgh, PA, is a graduate of Butler University with a BFA in Dance Performance and BS in Mathematics. At Butler, Isabelle earned the Eileen Poston Dance Scholarship for outstanding performance, the Amos Carpenter Memorial Award for excellence in mathematics, and joined Phi Beta Kappa. Since graduation, Isabelle has danced professionally with Ballet Austin, Shana Simmons Dance, and Deos Contemporary Ballet, where she is currently both Company Dancer and Marketing Manager. Isabelle began working with Dance Data Project® in May of 2021.

SURGICAL EMPATHY: HOW TO CONSTRUCT ARTISTIC FEEDBACK TO BE TRULY CONSTRUCTIVE

*Have patience with everything that remains unsolved in your heart.
Try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books written in a
foreign language. Do not now look for the answers. They cannot now be given to
you because you could not live them. It is a question of experiencing everything.
At present you need to live the question. Perhaps you will gradually, without even
noticing it, find yourself experiencing the answer, some distant day.*
(Rainer Maria Rilke)¹

The Violence of Feedback

Feedback for one's art is a minefield. The number of artists I have met over the years who are still bruised, wounded, or even traumatized by feedback they've received (sometimes 30 years ago) is devastating. It is exponentially more dangerous when the feedback is given to a young artist still training and developing their point of view and voice, especially if there is a power differential between the facilitator and the artist.

Giving feedback that moves the needle for the student/artist yet resists manipulation, shame, assumption, and bias is a specific and delicate offering. It requires not only considered structure but an ongoing effort on the part of the mentor to diminish opinion by seeking the surgical questions that will open the work without leaving a scar. Yet, feedback is rarely taught, even in Pedagogy courses. It is, rather, inherited. And, as with most inheritances, it brings with it the freight of the past, an accumulation of historical material, and is often heavily taxed.

Many teachers and mentors give insightful, precise, neutral feedback that allows the art student to contextualize *themselves* and not use the violence of opinion, advice, suggestion, or shame to make their point. Some pedagogues have invented their methods; many use or draw upon Liz Lerman, who structured Critical Response Process² (CRP) in 1990, eventually publishing a manual on the subject (co-authored with John Boerstel) in 2003.

But, in the aggregate, great feedback is rare. Much more common is feedback steeped in opinion, advice-giving, the deadly self-referential "what I'd like to see," or "I liked/hated the part where you..." and the most insidious: opinions disguised as questions, which infiltrate the student's sense of self and are, at worst, transgressive. Many of us believe in the question as an efficient tool to center the artist over the feedback giver. However, many questions fail to do

¹ Rilke, Rainer Maria. (1992). *Letters to a young poet*. San Rafael, CA.: New World Library.

² Lerman, Liz and Jon Boerstel. (2003). *Critical Response Process*. Washington D.C: Liz Lerman Dance Exchange.

this because they are loaded with our desires, preferences, and proclivities. Often they are preceded with a statement “to contextualize the question,” like “That section was very aggressive. Did you want it to be so angry?” This is an opinion in a question’s clothing and is just as dangerous as the wolf sneaking into the field for a stealthy attack.

Questions

I remember very clearly having coffee with my friend, the dramaturg Katherine Profeta, author of “Dramaturgy in Motion: At Work on Dance and Movement Performance.”³ I was as stuck as I had ever been, unable to plan my next rehearsal. “I am trying to work from both the beginning and the end of the piece, forward and backward. I’ve been hoping they will meet in the middle, but I’m starting to worry that I miscalculated and they don’t line up with each other,” I told her, feeling quite desperate. “Is it possible they’re two separate pieces?” she asked.

That question changed everything for me. They were two pieces, yes, and, more than that, one of them did not interest me, though it was the original seed of the work. The next rehearsal was the first of a two-year process, making what was initially supposed to be the coda to a wholly different piece and yielded my evening-length work, *milkdreams*.

In a room with the legendary dance mentor, Martha Meyers, she asked, “how do the characters relate to the space above them?” It sparked a vision of dancing with a balloon that became the central motif for my work, *You Are Here*, and an enduring metaphor for me as an artist. Would I ever have found those works without that simple question from these mentors?

Over the years, like many teachers of artists, I have begun to shed answers in favor of questions. For me, making art has always been an act of asking: asking to be witnessed, asking if we know one another, asking for permission, reward, consideration, asking for changes to be made, for forgiveness, for love. In owning that I have no answers, only questions, I have opened up to a deeper understanding of other people. Letting go of answers is an ongoing process, and it is challenging. Sitting in the unknowable space of questions can be uncomfortable and dangerous. However, the room devoid of questions is steeped in assumptions. As Anne Bogart says in her essay “Embarrassment,”

“The enemy of art is *assumption*: the assumption that you know what you are doing, the assumption that you know how to walk and how to talk, the assumption that what you ‘mean’ will mean the same thing to those who receive it. The instant you make an assumption about who the audience

³ Katherine Profeta. *Dramaturgy in Motion: At Work on Dance and Movement Performance*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

is, or what the moment is, that moment will be asleep. Assumptions can prevent you from entering new and [useful] embarrassing territory...”⁴

A question is an act of survival and subversion, it is practical and immaterial, and about both the personal and the universal. A question is the ignition and also the check engine light. It is both the keyhole and the key. A question is an endless open space where anything may happen.

Our questions to our students can be clarifying, frustrating portals to both other, better questions and, possibly, answers. Perhaps we can be a mentor who asks the right question at the right time. But they must be the right questions, free from opinion, bias, assumption, and prejudice.

Opinions

I have spent the past two decades extricating myself from the mother lode of *opinion* when giving feedback. Opinion is about *me*: what *I* like, what *I* want to see, how *my* personal history has shaped me. Questions are about the art and the artist. What is *this* trying to be? What are *you* trying to make? What is *your* voice? By separating my opinions from my questions, I relieve myself of a hierarchical role. My questions are true inquiries, not tools meant to chisel my way through to a predetermined answer. I can feel the opinion independently when I separate it from the question. This brings into bas relief the *sensation* of opinion. My body begins to recognize viscerally: *that's about me*. Then I have the option to bring that opinion into the room or not, which gives me more choices and allows for fewer assumptions.

“Those questions which are unexpected and complicated are the ones I appreciate most. They can help me a great deal, as I am compelled to take an interest in something that might not otherwise have occurred to me.”⁵

I have witnessed many people leading feedback over the years. Often they ask questions as their method. Actually, they are stating their opinion. If I separate my opinion from my question, I am forced to get inside the vehicle of curiosity and be driven by authentic inquiry. Being truly curious can be uncomfortable. I may disagree with your method. Your interests might not interest me. What *then*? As a mentor, I need to practice my own version of curiosity about the art and the artist. I may not be interested in their topic, but I am interested in *them*. Why does *this* interest *them*? What inner need does this act of making fulfill? Is there a way I can invite them to their best ideas within the genre or style that

⁴ Anne Bogart. (2001). *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre*. London: Routledge.

⁵ Tenzin Gyatso (Dalai Lama XIV) (1991). *Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama*. New York: Harper Perennial.

interests them? Are there obstacles, like privilege or ideology, keeping one of us from seeing the work contextually?

And what to do with my noisy opinions? I have sat with an artist whose work bored, irritated, or offended me. What a moment! Sitting in front of them just as their showing ends, their eyes turned to me, glimmering with expectation and an understandable desire for validation. I feel opinion coursing through me and feel the pressure to care for their sensitive, artistic heart, especially at this moment of burgeoning identity. It is a profound moment of choice. If I can feel *my* needs as distinct from *theirs*, I can serve them best. A TRUE question, one filled with genuine *not knowing*, is my only hope.

“What do you want the duration of the final section to accomplish?” I might ask, with genuine wonder. It was a section that made me angry in its slowness and length; watching it, I felt claustrophobic. Feeling it might never end, I experienced a sense of powerlessness, which triggered anger. “I want you to feel bored, lulled, unstable, maybe even frustrated,” the artist might respond. “Ohhhhhh...” That had not occurred to me. “Can you share more about why?” And THEN, we have an honest conversation on our hands. Sometimes that conversation turns a corner, and they have an “Ohhhhh” moment, a contextual frame they had not seen. Sometimes there is tough love involved in asking questions. They can be knives, but they are not meant to hurt, only to get to the deeper layers of what *is*. Applied with deft, surgical precision and an authentic desire to see the artist as they are, they do not leave a mark and can even heal.

Binaries

We must challenge some of our inheritances to provide rigorous yet empathetic feedback. One of these is the false narrative of a binary. We, especially in America, inherited a system in which many of our systems function within the rigidity of yes/no, good/bad, light/dark, positive/negative, etc., rather than on a continuum and within a complex ecosystem where friction, disruption, and contradiction are inherent to the growth process. We are engaged in a pivotal moment in our social structure, beginning to deconstruct long-held beliefs about gender, race, religion, culture, and sexuality. I would add art and education to the systems we are redefining. If we strip the fallacy of the binary from our art and art education, we free ourselves to consider much more inclusive and inviting spaces.

Just as the human body is not a simple set of levers but a complex system of interconnectedness (called tensegrity), our art is a complicated web of tensions. We can replace the idea that there are opposites and that we must choose one with a spectrum suggesting infinite possibilities between two polar views. If we invite the student to steer their course according to their unique voice, a

spectrum leaves more space and offers more personal choice for their expression than a binary. More options give us more tension points, a valuable tool in art-making and artistic feedback.

The tension of contradiction and multiplicity is a fecund place, which is why the idea of a binary often inhibits our fullness. It implies that we are one thing *or* another, that we must choose. It is hot or cold, not both. It is humor or pathos. A continuum makes space for both to exist in all their maddening complexities, a more truthful representation of what it feels like to be alive. This may allow our audience to recognize themselves in art more vividly since it reflects their lived experience, which is rarely black and white. Contradiction serves us by creating more complex stories, leaving the viewer open to their interpretation and analysis.

This is no less true in our feedback. We can describe a piece as both hopeful and sad. There can be both tenderness and violence, even in a single gesture. If we do not consider the spectrum or stay open to multiplicities, we may corner them into a single option and open the door to stereotypes, cliché, and generalizations.

Rejecting the binary diminishes prejudice by opening our imagination to new cultural information. It can be challenging to see the student clearly while steeped in our own social, political, racial, geographic, and religious architecture. We certainly see this when we consider colloquial versus academic language through the lens of colonialism. Where a feedback giver might assume one expression exhibited one quality and the other language choice exhibited its opposite, if we release the binary, we may see beyond our cultural presumptions and contextualize language in all its cultural complexity.

How do we break free from simple opposition in our art and feedback? If we enter a non-binary space with room for multiple points of view, we can probe the liminal space inside continuums. The right questions often make our opinions moot.

Values

I have had a few vigorous debates with colleagues about “value.” In my field of praxis, Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis,⁶ we talk about democratizing everything (Space, Time, Meaning, Relationship, Effort, Action, Shape) to the point that there are no hierarchies. This intends to release inherited biases,

⁶ **Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis** is a method and language for describing, visualizing, interpreting, and documenting human movement. It is based on the original work of Rudolf Laban, which was developed and extended by Lisa Ullmann, Irmgard Bartenieff, Warren Lamb and others. LBMA draws from multiple fields including anatomy, kinesiology and psychology. It is used by dancers, actors, musicians and athletes; by health professionals such as physical and occupational therapists and psychotherapists; and in anthropology, business consulting and leadership development.

challenge the intractability of habit, and recognize forces like capitalism, privilege, and nationalism that influence our behavior unconsciously. This means using more neutral language to describe what we see. We will use words like “strong” and “light” over words like “aggressive” and “limp” to de-stigmatize and disarm the listener. The intention is to reduce triggering language and make our feedback more inclusive and conscious.

Suppose we resist ascribing value to our students’ work immediately, and discuss, instead, what attracts, repels, delights, and disturbs us. In that case, we may offer them reprieve from many of the “givens” to which they unconsciously adhere. Releasing the codes of value from our language choices “too ____ (long/busy/heady/abstract)” allows us a pathway to a gentler offering, one that has a better chance of diminishing defensiveness. The less freighted our language, the more efficiently we can communicate without imposing our opinions on their work. How does this translate to teaching art? We can encourage our students to use their full palette by diminishing our attention hierarchies. Every dynamic, technique, frame, and duration is available.

It is not easy to let go of value. We are raised to have opinions, priorities, and values. These are fundamental building blocks of our unique human fingerprint. It is the architecture that distinguishes us from one another. Nevertheless, if we can temporarily set aside our assumptions of what is better or worse, right or wrong, we can stay mobile and invite all eventualities.

As we attempt to release a value system, **we start by shifting our language to be more neutral.** What did you observe, feel, and experience? We let go of judgment and interpretation. We release our plan, including (at first) our moral agenda. Even a statement like *kindness is “better” than cruelty* has an agenda, an interest in controlling our behavior, and contains an assumption. We take it as a given that kindness is better than cruelty. That is because we have already presumed a goal.

Goals

If we want our students to have complete access to their feelings, expression, and artistic freedom, they need to start with every possible choice. Otherwise, they are starting from a container of expectations, obligations, and “givens.” While I believe we can devalue what we see initially and allow every choice to have equal value, this is a *starting point*. Then we may assign value anywhere we want without being limited by habit, bias, assumption, or lack of range.

As a maker, performer, and teacher, I move beyond neutrality to a world where I set goals and *decide* what to prioritize and value. Is kindness better than

cruelty? That depends on my goal.⁷ I aim not to inflict pain, so kindness will function more efficiently than cruelty. However, having cruelty as an option makes kindness an active and constant choice rather than an expectation, giving me freedom. Suddenly, my kindness is an expression of my point of view, and desire, part of my fingerprint, and I am seen more fully.

Colonization

We have all been colonized by something. Our contemporary culture is built on frameworks of “isms” that took root long ago and continue to flourish. It takes concerted effort, especially when living with one or more privileges, to see the system at play in our process, much less radically alter it, but it is an important choice we must make as teachers to put in that work.

One of the ways we have been colonized is aesthetically. There has been a codification of art along aesthetic fault lines. To go back to our binary, you “must” choose what “type” of art you believe in and not diverge from it. You believe in *this* kind of art, and everything else is _____ (insert your descriptor: weird, superficial, indulgent, elitist). The shared essence among “genres” (the term “genre” is part of the systemic problem) is nullified by art education, which teaches us that *this* is unlike *that*, and what YOU do is better than what THEY do. Art is the ultimate clique. What happens, though, if we dissolve the containers and simply see, in all art, ideas about Time, Space, Meaning, Relationship, Material, Shape, and Environment?

What if we probe the work through the lenses of politics, identity, process, mathematics, physics, mythology, and history? Where do we align with one another, and what stories do we share? What do Alexander Calder and “So You Think You Can Dance” share? What do Basquiat and Taylor Swift share? Where do Merce Cunningham and Mad Men overlap? How is a Senegalese mask like a Rodin sculpture? How is Bharatanatyam like Irish step dancing and also like Hip Hop? How have parallel histories created these seemingly divergent forms and expressions? Where do we belong to one another? Again, finding the most neutral language will allow us to zoom out enough to notice these connections.

⁷The word “goal” has staked territory in capitalism and exceptionalism, and I like to reclaim it as a worthwhile idea in Pedagogy. The idea of having a “goal” can be triggering to both teachers and artists. It may seem like we are skipping the sensual experience of the present moment to cast ahead to the future. “It’s about the process, not the goal,” I imagine someone saying. I do not believe process and goals are mutually exclusive. Instead, they are entirely dependent upon one another. Every process has a goal, even if the goal is to notice, observe, feel, or experience. Supplant the word vision, desire, curiosity, or question, for goal, and perhaps we can meet in the field where wanting something is the fuel for work. If we imagine saying, “My desire is...” or “My curiosity is...” it suddenly loses its overtones of success or product and becomes embodied and visceral. I prefer to disrupt the Western definition of a goal as an objectifiable product and allow it to be about an ongoing, experiential process rather than a predetermined route toward a static endpoint. A goal, in this context, is, like love, a journey, not a place.

I am not implying that we should erase our powerful and ancestral connection to our personal, familial, or communal histories. Those are all containers for identity and celebration. However, opening those containers and noticing what they share is also a powerful tool of communion.

Part of the process of decolonizing the body and mind, of course, is to *question everything*, to assume nothing, to interrogate our process, our product, our intention, our passion, our materials, and all of our choices. This makes the practice of questions, especially questions devoid of inherited assumptions, so powerful in feedback.

Application: How do we apply these theoretical ideas to our classroom?

Opening Feedback

My first suggestion for the facilitator working towards a more empathetic but still rigorous feedback method is to **slow down**. Most of our first responses to a piece of art will be bodily reactions. These are immensely useful for us to notice but less valuable to iterate. If you finish watching the work and feel tense, delighted, or frustrated, those are important metrics to observe. Sharing them with the artist, though, makes the moment about *you*. Instead, keep the focus on *them*. It is vital to slow down enough to notice our bodily responses, note them to ourselves, and mindfully turn our attention to what they have made rather than how it made you feel, what you wish you had seen, or what you would prefer.

After taking a moment to acknowledge our physical and emotional responses to the work, we begin to communicate with the artist. Liz Lerman starts this process with “Statements of Meaning,” a rich upgrade on the age-old “Start by saying something nice.” Statements of meaning, for Lerman, are moments that stuck with you, made you curious, and innervated you. This is where having slowed down and noticed our bodily responses is essential. If we want to set the feedback up as a safer, braver space, we want to reflect what is working. This does not mean sugar-coating things, nor does it require any deception. **An artist will invest in what they do well**, so allow those meaningful moments to resonate by reflecting them first. Taking care of the hearts of our aspiring artists and giving them profitable places to put their energy, rather than starting with questions or criticism, will generate more openness and curiosity.

Isn't there an opinion inherent in a Statement of Meaning?

Not if it is done well. Rather than, “I liked the part where you...” we can say, “I found myself leaning in towards the stage when you....” While it is personal information about what happened to you, it shifts away from opinion. This is where you can selectively share some of those bodily experiences, adhering strictly to “I” statements. “I noticed I was very curious about...” is very different

from “I didn’t get what was going on there” or “It was confusing.” Some of our bodily responses, particularly those that were uncomfortable, frustrating, or irritating, should be left out at this stage. This is a moment to **reflect *what is working without subterfuge or decoration***. It is hard work to censor other thoughts and feelings here, but essential to separate them for now.

Resist “I liked/loved/wanted more of” statements.

Stick with sensory experiences, which are closer to fact than opinion. They may be facts only you know, but they are still tangible. What moments in their work created enjoyable sensations in your body? What resonated satisfyingly? What do you appreciate/what stayed with you? It is a subtle shift in language to speak from the “I” while resisting opinion. “I got quite excited when...” is sharing information from your body, but “I loved the part where...” is an idea that gives very little actionable information to the artist. When they go back to the studio to revise or progress their piece, remembering that a moment *created excitement* gives them something to invest in, whereas recalling that someone *loved* a moment gives a warm feeling but nothing to build upon.

What else can be done rather than Statements of Meaning?

There are plenty of other ways to begin non-violent feedback beyond Statements of Meaning. The most successful ones will center facts. We can start simply with, “What I Saw,” statements. Again, even as we are stating objective impressions, we must check ourselves for opinion. This means differentiating between, “I saw a person standing alone in relative stillness facing the audience, eventually being joined by a group of multi-generational people all facing upstage,” and, “I saw a woman waiting, and then a group of young and old people came on to confront her.” “Waiting” is an assumption of intention, “young” and “old,” are relative and subjective, and, “confront,” is a loaded and possibly triggering word.

Here are other options for opening the feedback session:

- Create a list of words that spring to mind, like word association.
- Ask viewers to put a crayon to paper and draw (without looking at their drawing) throughout the showing.
- Map the piece’s energy as the viewer experiences it, which looks like an EKG.
- Have viewers pick a color, an animal, a texture, or a construction (is it a house, a church, a barn, an obelisk?), but with no explanations. This is the difference between “It brought up the color teal, reminded me of a jaguar, felt like moss, and made me imagine a steep staircase to a Mayan temple” and “I thought of teal because the piece was dark, but also pretty.” or “It was like a Jaguar because it moved fast and felt kind of threatening.”

You can freely invent your method of opening feedback if it reflects some of the work's strengths, offers specificity, and resists opinion.

Questions from the artist

My next two steps (and they mirror Lerman's subsequent two phases of CRP) are questions. **If you only have time for a bit more, choose questions from the artist.** It is a worthwhile practice for an artist to define where their doubts or fears are or share something about what they are trying to create. This might look like, "Did that duet feel intimate?" or "Did anyone start to zone out during the group section?" Encourage them to be specific but not share so much context that they lead the answer, like, "I am trying to show the intimacy between the two characters. Did their duet feel intimate?" Some artists' questions will elicit opinions. This is fine as long as it is a focused question and they request opinions. This works best with closed, intentional questions, like "did the ending feel abrupt to you?" rather than open-ended questions, like "did you like the ending?" This way, the artist still controls the container of the response.

Often, artists struggle to define their questions. This is usually a sign that they have yet to actively witness their work, which is one of the benefits of feedback. I prefer to keep this step going even though the artist must still define their question. Pushing gently for their questions can often elicit an underlying or subconscious thought, doubt, or belief that will show itself spontaneously. I choose to lovingly not "let them off the hook" here.

Questions for the artist

If you have time, it is helpful to offer questions *to* the artist, being mindful of continuing to hold opinions at bay. This is the most challenging time to hold back opinions, offer suggestions, give advice, and try to exert your aesthetics on the work. These clarifying questions help me stay focused on the artist's intentions and avoid assumptions. Rather than, "did you want it to feel so confrontational?" we might say, "what interests you in terms of the power dynamics between audience and performer?" We already understand what *we* like in a piece of art. **We need to leave room to understand this particular artist's intentions to give valuable feedback within the container of their work.**

Finally, opinions.

If you have progressed through an opening reflection, and all the artist's and your questions, and you still have a burning opinion, you can share them with parameters. First, again, slow down. Ask yourself: have I been curious during these questions, or have I been silently waiting to release my opinion? If I have listened to the artist and their answers to my questions, and I still have a strong

opinion, I will give them the category and ask permission to share it. Then, state the category, like, “about the sound design,” or, “about the audience-performer relationship,” because some categories are moot for the artist. That was not the sound design, or the relationships have not been discussed with the performers yet, so opinions are not valuable here.

I must be vigilant about tone and power here. Do they feel comfortable saying “no” to me and in front of this group? If not, there are many ways to ask for permission without coercion. I might write them a note and have them check off yes or no. I might ask them privately. I may re-iterate the necessity of taking time before consenting. In any case, be sure there is a truthful and equanimous agreement before the opinion is offered.

The Non-violence of Feedback

Feedback is essential to create a growing, illuminating landscape and evolve as artists and humans. As with sound, if the original expression is too forceful or comes too close to the receiver, it will be experienced as painful to hear. There must be distance between the giver and receiver, which can be created by neutralizing our language, checking our opinions, owning our reactions, and using the artist’s intention and priorities as the framework for our comments. If we succeed, we can offer our students both validation and pressure, both essential to the artistic journey.

Quick Tips

1. Slow down. Take time to connect with your body before speaking
2. Own your opinions as being about *you*. Attempt to set them aside as you start offering feedback. There may be a place for them later, or you may notice them disappearing or becoming moot as feedback progresses. To this end, only use “I” statements and resist talking about “you.”
3. Find the most neutral language possible. If there is a less historically loaded word, use it.
4. If the creator performed, consider creating some dispassionate distance by calling them the, “performer,” or, “character,” rather than saying, “you.” (“When the performer suddenly started speaking, I felt startled, then found myself very attentive.”)
5. Reflect what is working to offer areas of fruitful investment to the artist, not to, “make them feel good.” Do not lie or sugar-coat.
6. Resist making, “I liked/loved,” or, “didn’t like/hated,” statements.
7. Do not offer suggestions or say, “what I would like to see is....” Unless they specifically ask for advice, do not give any. Even when asked, I often turn the question around to them before I offer my thoughts.

8. Do not make any assumptions about the artist's intentions. If you have not heard from them, ask.
9. Speak within the context of their genre, style, and intention, even if aspects of their work do not appeal to you. This does not mean I don't push them to be unique, inventive, and boundary-pushing *inside* their genre or style.
10. Frame feedback primarily through questions from and for the artist.
11. If you offer an opinion at the end, ask for permission to share it, and let them know what it relates to ("I have an opinion about the costumes. Would you like to hear it?"). Be sure you have framed it so that the student has access to their, "no," especially if there is an implied or explicit power differential (like student/teacher or artist/presenter or simply deep respect and admiration from the artist to the viewer).

...

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ENTRENCHED INEQUALITY: HIERARCHY, HEGEMONY, AND THE ROLE OF GENDER IN BALLET

The lives of women have changed, and arguably improved, dramatically in the last two centuries. My life in ballet, however, has led me to question whether the lives of female ballet dancers have necessarily kept pace, and if not, what mechanisms function to compromise their equality and curtail their freedom? This essay examines the ways in which historical, hierarchical structures in ballet have led to a hegemonic system of control, resulting in unequal gender representation among ballet's leadership. My own experiences in both small and large companies in the US and Europe, along with similar accounts documented by me and other researchers, provide evidence of the ubiquity of the marginalization experienced by women in professional ballet. This research aims to demonstrate the entrenched and systemic nature of these inequalities and provide further motivation for radical and fundamental changes to the industry.

Ballet is a grueling profession in nearly every sense. Financially precarious, physically brutal, and psychologically exhausting, it is a career that should arguably only be pursued by those who are quite sure they could not be happy doing anything else. While the challenges of a life in ballet affect both men and women, even a cursory reading of biographical literature in the profession points to the fact that women experience ballet's injustices more acutely and more frequently than their male counterparts. Ballet's inequitable social structures mean that men are more likely to be directors or choreographers, encouraged to take risks and innovate, while women are expected to (literally) fall into line. Recognition of this phenomenon is imperative if meaningful solutions are to be found and greater industry equity achieved.

I am not the first well-intentioned author to attempt to shine the spotlight on what happens behind the curtain in the often dramatized 'real' lives of dancers. While not extensive, first-hand accounts of ballet's reality are available, however the pictures they paint are strikingly similar even as decades separate them. Suzanne Gordon offered a compelling behind-the-scenes look at the lives of dancers at New York City Ballet (NYCB) and American Ballet Theatre (ABT) in the early 1980s, much of which is discouragingly as relevant today as it was then.¹ Nearly twenty years later Helena Wulff used her conversations with dancers at London's Royal Ballet, Royal Swedish Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre to illustrate the often private world of ballet off-stage.² Skip forward another ten years and dance critic Dierdre Kelly provided a thorough history of ballet's origins (including the ballerina's first role as courtesan), demonstrating how the status of female dancers within ballet hierarchy has remained largely unchanged for centuries.³ In 2021 journalist Chloe Angyal released *Turning Pointe* which deftly illustrated some the ways the ballet world has attempted

to project progress and change, while continuing to utilize the same damaging tactics and ideology on which it has always relied.⁴

Archaic hierarchical structures are one of the fundamental ways that ballet companies maintain control over the dancers they ‘employ’ (quotations used to acknowledge the many trainees and apprentices who work without pay or pay below a livable wage). Although they are the ones literally embodying the art form on stage, ballet dancers, particularly women, are often regarded as highly replaceable. A dancer’s expendability is reinforced throughout her training and into her career, and she is always acutely aware of how quickly she could lose the ‘privilege’ of employment. Even if a dancer is hired for a ‘full-time’ contract (in the US this can often mean as little as 32 weeks per year), she is still expected to make physical and personal sacrifices for the company that are rarely reciprocated by the organization which employs her. If she becomes injured, or simply displeases those at the front of the room, her contract may be terminated (or at least not renewed). The expendability experienced by women in ballet is a direct result of the hierarchical structures which have not only been created by the industry, but actively maintained by it.

Within these traditional hierarchical structures deference is expected from younger to older, lower rank to superior, and from dancers to director. Stratification is present not just among the dancers but between the stage hands, musicians, and administrative and artistic staff, with dancers consistently at the bottom of the social pyramid both in terms of compensation and employee protections. The basic structure of a ballet company, and many of its practices, can be traced back to the oldest national ballet company in the world. Founded in 1669 as the Académie d’Opéra, the Paris Opera Ballet has produced and employed some of the most influential players in ballet’s history, and its pyramid ranking system has been replicated by medium to large ballet companies around the world.⁵

With some variation, generally a small number of principals (or étoiles in Paris) occupy the top tier of the company, supported by a slightly larger number of soloists, then demi-soloists, *coryphée* or first artists, *corps de ballet* or artists, and finally apprentices or trainees. The stratification of dancers based on skill and experience is, of course, inevitable and expected. The potential variation in treatment and professional respect afforded dancers at each level, however, should not be. Instead of valuing seasoned *corps de ballet* members, in America those dancers “tend to be replaced by younger recruits fed on the same dreams of glory.”⁶ Dancers on the bottom rungs of a company’s ladder typically have even less power than their soloist or principal counterparts, and while they comprise the numerical majority in a company, they have proportionally less say in its direction.

Due to the casting demands of most large-scale ballet productions, the majority of dancers in the *corps* or apprentice group of a company also tend to be women. During the 2016/2017 season, eight of the nine largest AGMA (American Guild of Musical Artists) signatory companies (NYCB, ABT, San Francisco Ballet, Houston Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Ballet West, and Pennsylvania Ballet) had a *corps* that was over 50% female, with some as high as 67%.⁷ Those percentages rose significantly when apprentices were included. What this means is that most ballet companies have many more women than men on their company roster, but the majority of those women are in lower ranking positions than their male peers and are considered more expendable and likely to be replaced by someone younger. Women may hold the most prestigious prima ballerina positions in a company, but they simultaneously occupy more of the lower status roles as well, feeding a narrative in which female dancers are imagined as more childlike and less valuable than their male counterparts.

Similarly, squarely at the bottom of the Paris Opera's hierarchy in the 19th century were the *petits rats*: girls between the ages of six and eight, often from poor families, who populated both the *corps de ballet* as well as the *foyer de la danse*. Usually selected from slum communities in Paris, the *petits rats* trained with and performed for the Opera, but as they were often unpaid, or severely underpaid, to start, they were forced to "supplement[ed] their incomes and advance[d] in the ranks at the Opera by offering sexual favors to the *abonnés*."⁸ While the practice of engaging an *abonné* for financial protection was both sanctioned and broadly encouraged by both the company and the dancers' mothers, the young women who participated were often vilified for their loose morals.⁹ Rather than blame the system that entrapped these students, or the men who propagated it, though, the young girls themselves were held responsible.¹⁰ The social control wielded by the Opera's leadership and their financial backers meant that those in the most vulnerable position, with the least power to enact change, were the ones being blamed for an abusive system.

Hierarchy does not just exist among dancers, however. The ballet world is built on respect for authority and there is a strict social code that dictates how dancers relate not only to each other, but to those at the front of the room. This is instilled from an early age; young ballet students are taught that the teacher should always be respected and never contradicted. In most ballet companies, the artistic director sits atop the social pyramid. While (usually) he is typically assisted and overseen by an executive director and a board, those individuals have limited interactions with the dancers themselves. Below the artistic director is often one or more ballet masters or mistresses, individuals who teach classes and run rehearsals. They carry out many of the day-to-day functions of the company and often advise the director on casting decisions. Also important is the role of choreographer. In smaller companies the artistic director and

choreographer may be one and the same, but larger companies will often invite guest choreographers or offer a residency to one long-term. Below the choreographer there is sometimes a rehearsal assistant or *répétiteur*. All of these individuals are higher in the social pecking order than even the principal dancers. Choreographers, rehearsal assistants, ballet masters, artistic directors, and even administrative staff can expect to out-earn the dancers with whom they work.¹¹ Once a dancer retires from the stage it is not uncommon to transition into an administrative or teaching role, or become a ballet master or choreographer, and that job change is usually regarded as a step up the professional ladder. Compared to the administration of a company, and even the musicians, stagehands, and other theater staff, “it is clear that dancers are not only the lowest paid workers in the ballet world; they are also the least respected.”¹²

The power in ballet companies rests almost exclusively with a small group of people at the front of the room, instead of the dancers who populate the stage and rehearsal studios. Because this dynamic has existed since ballet’s inception, it is difficult to imagine a world in which it is not the case. Subsequently, change is slow to occur. The near-universal adoption of traditional hierarchical structures across the ballet world has created an environment where a small number of individuals at the top wield outsized control over those beneath them, and the pressure dancers feel to be grateful for the ‘opportunity’ means they not only do not offer much resistance to those in power, but are frequently complicit and willing participants in their own subjugation.

A tiered ranking system itself is not enough to marginalize the large majority of ballet’s participants, however. To do that requires the cultivation of ideas, of norms, of a culture of acquiescence and acceptance of the status quo and those in power. Namely, it requires hegemony. Developed by Antonio Gramsci, the basic premise of hegemony is that “man is not ruled by force alone, but also by ideas.”¹³ It asserts that the ruling class efficiently controls the rest of the population through the generation of norms and ideals; society perpetuates the validity of these silent rules and effectively consents to be led.¹⁴ In ballet, the hegemonic control by historically white, male leadership has dictated the social roles and hierarchical stratification of dancers and has restricted the status and agency of women in particular. Further, because the nature of hegemony is that those under its control are inherently complicit in its authority, the injustices in the system can be difficult to quantify. This means that the systemic issues women in ballet endure can go unchecked for decades, even centuries, and ultimately the responsibility of their resolution is thrust upon those with the least power to change it, in this case, dancers themselves.

One of the reasons this unbalanced system survives is because power in the ballet world is centralized in just a few individuals. After the 1830 Revolution

the Paris Opera changed from “a dependency of the Royal Household into a subsidized private enterprise,” and Dr. Louis Véron was appointed to lead the company.¹⁵ Véron “became an entrepreneur with unlimited powers” who could hire and fire dancers as he chose and eradicate the dancers’ pension scheme.¹⁶ Today, artistic directors have near-total control over the hiring and firing of dancers based on their own tastes and preferences, with Ángel Corella famously firing over a quarter of Pennsylvania Ballet after he took over in 2014.¹⁷ Gordon remarks that ballet “is a closed world where those in authority have almost total control over every aspect of the dancer’s life. Behind the intricate and beautiful choreography we see onstage is an even more forceful yet subtle choreography of power.”¹⁸ The hegemonic control exerted by a few, primarily male, directors at the top has ensured the continuation of an industry in which the dancer can be both a choreographer’s exalted muse and a disposable by-product of his capricious whims.

As a result of its hegemonic social structures, ballet has been under the creative control of men for nearly all of its existence. While Balanchine famously said that “ballet is woman”, an examination of the gender composition of ballet company boards, artistic directors, and choreographers reveals that ballet is decidedly orchestrated by men. Historically a boy’s club where men are the artists and women the tools of their creation, ballet has been slow to change the model where women are encouraged to stay in line and men are allowed the freedom to innovate. Challenges to this narrative certainly exist: Dame Ninette de Valois and Marie Rambert were the bedrock of ballet in England, major companies like Paris Opera Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Washington Ballet, and Norwegian National Ballet are currently run by women, and a small start-up dance project is as likely to be run by a female entrepreneur as a male. But viewing these changes as the final frontier in ballet egalitarianism is as short-sighted as seeing the election of President Barack Obama in 2008 as the end of racism in America. Exceptional victories do not eradicate systemic issues, and if vigilance is not maintained, the celebration of success can actually take the wind out of the sails of progress.

Creating opportunities for women to break through the glass ceiling separating them from ballet’s positions of power is certainly vital, but it is only half of the equation. To fully address the gender disparity in ballet’s leadership one must recognize the opposing phenomenon of the “glass escalator”: the system by which men in female-dominated fields (like ballet) are ushered up the ranks and into upper level creative and management positions.¹⁹ Research published by Christine Williams shows that men in the fields she studied (nursing, social work, elementary teaching, and librarianship) are “kicked upstairs,” actively recruited for administrative and managerial roles, and ride an invisible escalator that carry them to the top of their profession.²⁰ In female-dominated professions, just as in male-dominated ones, men comprise

the majority of the managerial or supervisory roles, which means even when men are the minority in their field, they are “fairly likely to be supervised by a member of their own sex.”²¹ For women this means forming the networking and mentorship connections needed to rise to the top can be difficult while men are more likely to receive individual attention and greater opportunities for promotion. This is undoubtedly the case in ballet.

Dance Data Project’s (DDP) 2021 Artistic and Executive Leadership Report revealed that 70% of Artistic Directors in the Top 50 ballet companies in the US are male. That number jumps to 90% in the Top 10 (though Tamara Rojo’s ascension to Artistic Director of San Francisco Ballet drops that number to 80%).²² In a field disproportionately populated by women, ballet has remained largely under the artistic direction and leadership of men since its inception. This is evident today not just in the overrepresentation of men in artistic and executive director roles, but in the significant underrepresentation of women as choreographers. Colette Kelly uses the glass escalator concept to address the dearth of female choreographers in ballet and to highlight the institutional advantages given to men.²³ She summarizes the career trajectories of two acclaimed male choreographers: Justin Peck and Benjamin Millepied, highlighting the mentorship and choreographic opportunities they received as young artists. She points to the fact that Millepied’s first choreographic work, *Triple Duet* (2002) appeared alongside works by Christopher Wheeldon, Jerome Robbins, and George Balanchine, “suggesting that Millepied belonged to an elite, male line of NYCB choreographers.”²⁴ She argues that both choreographers’ careers were springboarded by the endorsement they received from then-director of NYCB Peter Martins, an occurrence that eludes many female choreographers.

Ashley Boudier, a principal dancer with NYCB and founder of the Ashley Boudier Project, has been particularly outspoken in recent years about the dearth of female choreographers. While she believes that companies need to do their part to nurture and promote female talent, she also recognizes the ways in which female dancers are at a disadvantage. For one, women simply have less time to be creative. In an interview with the Huffington Post, Boudier explained that while NYCB male dancers do a lot, the women do far more.²⁵ A *corps* dancer could be in as many as three ballets in a given evening, which means not only more rehearsal time, but more time doing elaborate stage hair and makeup, and sewing pointe shoes, things to which male dancers do not have to devote their time. Another factor Boudier noted is that in order to create, one needs the space to take risks, and to fail, and boys are far more likely to have that luxury afforded them than girls. She said, “There are so many little girls...you have to fit in and be quiet”, whereas boys can “do whatever as long as they keep showing up.”

Historically many factors have contributed to the underrepresentation of women as choreographers, not least of which being the hegemonic overrepresentation of men in those roles, which makes it more difficult to imagine women in them. Lynn Garafola points to the accepted division of labour along gender lines (men as choreographers, women as performers) as one explanation, along with the idea that ballet's rigid structure limits creativity and that women are traditionally represented as the objects of men's gaze in classical ballet.²⁶ She also notes that for many of the women whose artistic contributions are familiar to us (Bronislava Nijinska, Dame Ninette de Valois, Marie Rambert), their companies and legacies were taken over by men after their departure from the field (London's Royal Ballet, Ballet Rambert, and ABT all passed from female to male directorship). Today we can still see an inverse correlation between female directorship and company size, with men increasingly likely to hold positions of authority the more prominent the organization. In the 'Next 50' list (the fifty 'major' US companies after the Largest 50) according to DDP, women comprise 51% of Artistic Directors, as opposed to 30% in the Largest 50, and 20% and 10% in the Largest 25 and Largest 10 respectively.²⁷ While questioning "Where Are All the Women Choreographers in Ballet?" Joellen A. Meglin and Lynn Matluck Brooks observed that "even where women served as grassroots founders and innovators, once the power and prestige of the established institutions come into play, men are perceived as the likely heirs."²⁸ Not only do women struggle to climb the ranks of ballet's leadership, but once there they are more likely to encounter deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes and receive less compensation for their labour. In addition to holding far fewer of the directorship roles of top ballet companies, DDP reported that in 2019 female Artistic Directors earned just 60 cents for every dollar their male counterparts commanded.²⁹

Garafola also notes that due to a variety of factors (sexism in particular) many of ballet's female leaders and choreographers throughout history, like Madame Mariquita in the 1920s, were relegated to the fringes of dance society, presenting avant-garde work in second tier theaters like the Opéra-Comique in Paris.³⁰ During the 1920s and 1930s in England, ballet was still associated with music halls and not 'high art' institutions like opera houses, and as such the women who created for these start-up companies did not receive the financial support or access to power enjoyed by many of their male peers. As recently as the mid-1900s female ballet choreographer Ruth Page was largely dismissed by critics and omitted from ballet's historical texts despite earning "a place in dance history", arguably due to her gender.³¹

Interestingly, however, the same has not generally been true for modern dance and tanztheater, which have been dominated by women like Isadora Duncan, Doris Humphrey, Martha Graham, Pina Bausch, and Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker. Perhaps it is due to modern dance's roots in the rejection of

ballet's rigidity, or the fact that modern dance companies do not usually have the same entrenched institutional hierarchy as ballet, that women have succeed in this genre. It is possible that women are not inclined to create works that fit into ballet's existing canon of narratives from the male perspective. Maybe ballet's history of male domination means that when women are in charge they are invariably compared to their male peers and precedents (Bronislava Nijinska to her brother Vaslav Nijinsky) whereas in modern dance women were the pioneers and originators of the form. In any case, failing to acknowledge female leaders and choreographers in ballet's history reduces the visibility and representation of women in leadership roles, and reinforces the notion that men are creators, women the tools of creation.

The experiences of women in ballet will likely never change, though, if the leadership does not evolve to reflect the individuals it represents. Meglin and Brooks muse "whether one solution to the problem of dismantling ballet's entrenched gender roles may be to incorporate more women's voices into the artistic leadership of ballet companies."³² While putting more women in power is not a panacea, one cannot realistically hope to disrupt the narrative of female dancers as young and tractable without a radical shift in the gender composition of ballet's leadership. With few examples to emulate and little hope for equitable treatment or pay, it's hardly surprising that women have largely remained the tools of creation rather than the architects of their own profession.

The conclusion this research reaches is certainly that the world of ballet should change, but a more pressing question is whether it can. Educating ballet's donor base, and bringing the often anachronistic realities of ballet into public light, is crucial for change to occur. According to the Dance Data Project, donating to a female-led production, for example, is not enough to "move the needle in terms of women's leadership in classical ballet" so they instead strive to generate change by advocating "for political and economic pressure through an informed donor base, whether that base be supported by individuals, corporations, or foundations."³³ In other words, supporting ballet as an art form is not enough; one must encourage donors and fans to intentionally support leaders and organizations who demonstrate a clear intention to equalize the gender makeup of their leadership and earnestly strive to protect their dancers' wellbeing. Ballet's hierarchical structures must be disrupted and the composition of its leadership must evolve if dancers will ever stand a chance of escaping the hegemonic control under which they operate. Understanding the roots of this unequal system and the means by which it is upheld will hopefully contribute to the slow wave of progress in the world of ballet and enable the ballerina to step out of the realm of fantasy and regain the professional agency long owed her.

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C4-ORIENTED REHEARSING STAGES AND THE DEMOLITION OF THE MAESTRO TRADITION

In the context of a large musical ensemble, agency is closely related to intellectual dimensions of diversity, equity, and inclusion, yet achieving a true DEI practice within the rehearsal environment has emerged as a major challenge confronting educators. It has proven significantly easier to develop diversified curricula, and even to expand music education to involve both the music and the people of historically excluded or marginalized groups, than to alter the traditional practice of directing and rehearsing an ensemble towards a model more welcoming of participant voice. Past and current models attempting to move towards this goal have demonstrated significant deficiencies in effectiveness, efficiency of time, quality of artistic outcomes, or all three simultaneously.

The barriers may be considerable, but they are not insurmountable. Key research in music perception and cognition, as well as new insights into how musical consensus can be functionally achieved in collaborative settings have informed a new approach to the practice of large ensembles. C4-Oriented Rehearsing is an inductively determined progression through which musicians can effectively, efficiently, and artistically rehearse and present performances in the absence of a single interpretative authority figure. It allows for the meaningful elevation and integration of diverse participant artistic thought by focusing on the negotiation and resolution of interpretive or technical challenges solely through musical means. It is fully scalable, practice-validated in settings from 2 to 130 musicians. Properly implemented, C4-Oriented Rehearsing has proven to provide performers with the in-depth understanding they require in order to execute even the most sophisticated works without a conventional conductor but at the highest artistic standards, and reframes the act of music-making from one of obedience to a baton to that of shared responsibility and collective ownership of the performance.

Historical context

The problem of large ensemble leadership is a significant and long-standing one. As orchestras expanded in the early to mid-1800s from small groups of perhaps 20 players to large ensembles of 60-100 plus musicians closely resembling the orchestras of today, authority for coordinating performances became centralized in a specialist whose sole function was to provide visual timing information: the conductor. The innovation lay not within the centralization of power or the specialization of function, as many examples of both exist throughout the long history of ensemble music-making, but with the fact that the specialist now provided this information silently through physical gesture, not through audible

cues from objects being struck or an instrument being played.

In the earliest days of the emerging discipline, conductors were frequently also the composers of the music being performed, so they naturally assumed leadership of the preparation process. Over the course of the 19th century these circumstances may have led to a conflation of the individual on the podium with the ultimate interpretive authority, an evolution whose end product was neatly described by David Ewen in the title of his study of some significant 20th Century orchestra directors: “Dictators of the Baton.”¹ The unilateral model of leadership left no room for diversity or inclusivity of thought from the ensemble at large, and consequently was patently, even deliberately inequitable, leading to multiple instances of criminally abusive behaviour even within the last decade.²

There have been numerous attempts to democratize the orchestral environment, from the early Soviet orchestra *Persimfans*³ whose musicians faced inwards, to the contemporary string ensemble ‘A Far Cry’, the latest of the so-called conductorless ensembles in the mold of the Orpheus Ensemble of New York. True to the letter of their pledge, musical coordination in the modern groups is achieved not with a conductor on a podium but through a physically demonstrative designated instrumentalist, most often trading a baton for a bow. As for the spirit of the pledge, this practice is simply one of conductor substitution, in which the centralized timing information is displaced barely two feet from a podium to a musician within the ensemble. Multiple research studies have failed to recognize the label of being conductorless as primarily rhetorical in their analyses of these groups, compromising the conclusions.^{4,5,6} Nor does the displacement constitute any kind of advancement, as some of those same studies suggested: if anything, it represents a reversion to historical practice.

Most recently, the Venezuelan National Network of Youth Orchestras, more popularly known as *el Sistema*, presented a vision of music-making that seemed to oppose the consolidation of power on the podium entirely. Ostensibly oriented towards social growth as much as artistic impact, *el Sistema* and its acolytes presented the orchestra as a democratic forum perfect for building both consensus and community.⁷ So radical was the described paradigm shift in the historic practice of the ensemble that some of the more skeptical investigators

¹ David Ewen, *Dictators of the Baton*. (Chicago: Alliance Book Corporation, 1943).

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/13/arts/music/james-levine-metropolitan-opera-yannick-nezet-seguin.html>, retrieved Dec 31, 2023.

³ Pauline Fairclough, *Classics for the Masses: Shaping Soviet Musical Identity under Lenin and Stalin*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016). <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300219432>

⁴ Dmitry M. Khodyakov, “The complexity of trust-control relationships in creative organizations: Insights from a qualitative analysis of a conductorless orchestra,” *Social Forces* 86, no. 1 (2007): 1-22.

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⁶ Donald Vredenburg and Irene Yunxia He, “Leadership Lessons from a Conductorless Orchestra,” *Business Horizons* 46, no. 5 (2003): 19-24.

⁷ https://blog.ted.com/_weve_transcrib/. Retrieved Dec 28, 2022.

drew analogies to the Emperor's New Clothes in their philosophical disbelief.⁸

Far from the Emperor having no clothes, it turned out that the fine clothes had no enlightened monarch beneath them, only another absolute dictator. Underneath the polished rhetorical raiment of the supremely quotable founder, Dr. José Antonio Abreu, was not the innovative, radical new practice promised, but a model of repetition and conductor authoritarianism so regressive that like its early 20th Century incarnations in the more northern Americas, it often crossed the line to the repressive or abusive.⁹ El Sistema's pledge of "social action through music" (*acción social por la musica*) was exposed as solely rhetorical, not praxial; the musicians were discovered as coming predominantly from the middle class; and even Abreu's academic honorific was revealed as self-awarded.^{10,11} In summary, the limited inroads achieved into addressing the problem of the democratization of the large ensemble appear to have been largely oratorical or optical, rather than functional.

Current educational and pedagogical context

Authoritarian modes of leadership in education are not limited to large ensembles in music. The phenomenon is so prevalent it may be the default mode of instruction across most disciplines, simply under more euphemistic names. Paulo Freire described it as the "banking" model of instruction, his choice of words a reference to the unidirectional nature of the transaction between instructor and student.¹² The expectation within this model is that the teacher speaks with perfect clarity, the pupil listens attentively, retains faultlessly, and then reproduces the information on demand. The model has achieved enduring popularity thanks to its purported efficiency of time, despite its self-evident flaws and antithetical nature to the human processes involved in education: in short, it speaks to an ideal of *teaching*, rather than *learning*. To extend Freire's banking analogy, the undisputed weakness of the method is that the cognitive barriers to the reception and absorption of data, i.e.: the transaction fees are so high, instructional "deposits" of information are significantly diminished by the time the student attempts a withdrawal. As an alternative, Freire postulated a "dialectic" approach, a debate-based model rooted in Hegelian thought in which thesis is posed against antithesis, until synthesis of new ideas emerges. In this

⁸ <https://geoffbakermusic.wordpress.com/el-sistema-older-posts/researching-el-sistema/> Retrieved Dec 26, 2022.

⁹ Geoffrey Baker, *El Sistema : Orchestrating Venezuela's Youth* (New York: Oxford University Press 2015).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ <https://slippedisc.com/2017/12/exclusive-el-sistema-founder-had-a-phantom-phd/> Retrieved Dec 27, 2022.

¹² Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2000).

model it is the very process of investigation that confers understanding upon the investigators, and with understanding comes enhanced retention.

A key distinction between Freire's proposal and the Socratic method is that the relationship within Freire's debating dyad is peer-based, rather than the Socratic, in which instance the instructor leads the students towards a desired outcome by probing and challenging the students' reasoning, encouraging its evolution. But any kind of existing dialectic model, in current applications to the orchestra, has proven problematic. In the book "Leadership Ensemble", the authors report that the Orpheus Ensemble requires three times as much rehearsal time to prepare a performance in comparison to a conventional conductor-led orchestra.¹³ This marked inefficiency is compounded by the authors' perceptive acknowledgement that the label "conductorless" is merely a distinction of optics rather than operations: performances are still coordinated visually by a single instrumentalist, one thus imbued with a significant degree of artistic control. What authority is not centralized within the leading instrumentalist is devolved to a rotating subgroup of musicians who discuss interpretation, yielding what is literally art by committee, with results described by one New York Times critic as uneven, and some of its own members as "diluted."^{14,15} The failure of the orchestral industry to identify or develop more genuinely equitable leadership models without compromising artistic quality has led at least one researcher in this area of study to propose the abandonment the orchestra as a medium entirely for any kind of effort towards intellectual democratization or diversification.¹⁶

The Orpheus Ensemble is not bestowed with limitless resources. The three-fold increase in rehearsal time their model demands is subsidized directly by the musicians, with their motivation to work without a conventional conductor being best quantified by their willingness to work for less pay. Similarly, a study of data collected during the 1990s noted that orchestra musicians enjoyed less workplace satisfaction than prison guards (but more than professional hockey players, a scenario which suggests little correlation between compensation and satisfaction), whereas the workers enjoying the highest level of professional satisfaction were found in string quartets.¹⁷ The primary pragmatic difference between an orchestral and a chamber musician is the relative degree of

¹³ Harvey Seifter and Peter Economy, *Leadership Ensemble : Lessons in Collaborative Management from the World's Only Conductorless Orchestra*. 1st ed. (New York: Times Books, 2001).

¹⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/06/arts/music-the-orpheus-mystique-and-myths.html>. Retrieved Jan 3, 2023.

¹⁵ Khodyakov, "The complexity of trust-control relationships in creative organizations: Insights from a qualitative analysis of a conductorless orchestra."

¹⁶ Geoffrey Baker, *Social Action through Music : The Search for Coexistence and Citizenship in Medellín's Music Schools* (Cambridge UK: Open Book, 2021).

¹⁷ Jutta Allmendinger, J. Richard Hackman, and Erin V. Lehman, "Life and Work in Symphony Orchestras," *The Musical Quarterly* 80, no. 2 (1996): 194–219. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/742362>.

individual empowerment in the working environment, and that relationship between musical agency and satisfaction is borne out similarly in other research.¹⁸

The extant literature confirms the importance of inclusion, primarily for reasons of musician satisfaction, rather than the moral and ethical elements that have recently emerged, but offers very little understanding or practical direction as how to achieve it.¹⁹ The Orpheus model and its attempt to integrate a dialectic approach still exhibits significant practical limitations in terms of promoting inclusivity, but whatever minor benefits the model offers are entirely negated by the impracticality of the attendant three-fold increase in rehearsal time to allow for discussion. Most investigators of conductorless ensembles seem to accept as axiomatic that a dialectic process within large ensembles is verbal, whether it occurs between a subset of musicians, or between a centralized authority figure as one half of the dyad, and the individual musicians forming the other. This may be the critical false assumption or misattribution, rooted in history and tradition, that has prevented the evolution or exploration of a more progressive leadership model. The concept of dialectics in the orchestra takes a fundamental shift when it is considered as a process that emerges between the musicians themselves, and moreover, one that happens non-verbally but exclusively through the musical medium.

This notion is neither bold nor original given how consistently it is confirmed in the research into synchrony, the cognitive and perceptual process of how humans synchronize activities, sound generating or otherwise. Studies investigating how musicians coordinate in performance have established that the eye is not just slow and subjective, but also highly fallible in comparison to the ear.^{20,21,22} The primary impetus for synchronized ensemble playing is not the conductor but the sound being collectively generated.^{23,24,25} Once this critical

¹⁸ Aaron Williamon (ed.), *Musical Excellence: Strategies and Techniques to Enhance Performance* (Oxford, 2004; online edn, Oxford Academic, 22 Mar. 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198525356.001.0001>, retrieved 20 Dec. 2022.

¹⁹ See Williamon, Allmendinger and Seifter/Economy

²⁰ Bruno Hermann Repp, "Musical synchronization," *Music, motor control, and the brain* (2006): 55-76.

²¹ Geoff Luck and Petri Toiviainen, "Ensemble musicians' synchronization with conductors' gestures: An automated feature-extraction analysis," *Music Perception* 24, no. 2 (2006): 189-200.

²² Vatakis Argiro and Charles Spence, "Audiovisual synchrony perception for music, speech, and object actions," *Brain Research*, Volume 1111, Issue 1 (2006): 134-142.

²³ Bruno Repp and A. Penel, "Rhythmic movement is attracted more strongly to auditory than to visual rhythms," *Psychological Research* 68, 252-270: (2004). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00426-003-0143-8>

²⁴ W. Goebl and C. Palmer, "Synchronization of timing and motion among performing musicians," *Music Perception* 26, 2009: 427-438. doi: 10.1525/mp.2009.26.5.427.

²⁵ P.E. Keller and M. Appel, "Individual differences, auditory imagery, and the coordination of body movements and sounds in musical ensembles," *Music Perception* 28, 2009: 27-46. doi: 10.1525/mp.2010.28.1.27.

distinction is understood, a framework for a non-verbal dialectic process can be developed inductively, simply through observations of patterns and outcomes within the rehearsal environment. A framework is essential for transferability or teachability of concept. Just as there is no Socratic reference “handbook” for teachers with pre-formed artful questions that address all possible permutations of thought that might emerge in any discussion, there is no specific “toolkit” for orchestra leadership that can encompass all the possible scenarios, so context specific is the craft.

The framework here proposed to guide and inform large ensemble facilitation is called C4 Oriented Rehearsing, with each “C” referring to one of four discernable stages of problem solving.

The C4 Stages

C1. Comprehension

For any musical problem to be solved, be it a problem of starting together, of intonation, of style, attack, release, or dynamic, the nature of the problem must first be fully understood. The understanding can be explicit or implicit, but comprehension must be present and shared before the task of solving it can begin.

C2. Coordination

This phase can best be described as one of experimentation, of trial and error as musicians work out *through their playing* potential solutions to the problem that was revealed in the first stage, and identify the most effective means to the desired end.

C3. Consolidation

Consolidation is a stage of reinforcement, of growing comfortable and secure in the solution(s) that emerged in Stage 2.

C4. Creation

As the name suggests, this stage marks the moment when technical considerations are resolved to the extent that they can be sublimated in the full service of art. The problems are understood, solutions developed and reinforced, with the musicians now able to turn their attention, consciously or subconsciously, to considerations of sound quality and style. Creation, in this context, is a liberated space in which musicians become so connected that moments of great spontaneity, moments of natural and organic music making, or extraordinary acts of collective intuition and interaction can occur.

Once the C4 stages are understood, the required shift in leadership paradigm becomes clearer. Authoritarianism simply does not function within the C4 process, either on the part of the person guiding it, or from within the musicians: members of the Orpheus Ensemble have remarked on the impossibility of one musician imposing their artistic will on others while

playing.²⁶ Consensus-building and negotiation are (ironically) non-negotiable qualities while actively making music. By the same token, the individual leading the process externally, and therefore not participating actively in the negotiation through sound, is unable to influence unilaterally the artistic outcome either. Consistent with findings from other studies, in the absence of a designated leader, the very concept of leadership within the group becomes significantly more fluid, bestowed purely as a function of musical context, not by title.^{27,28} The facilitated rehearsal environment must then be considered as one in which multiple integrative processes are occurring simultaneously, with multiple musical leadership roles occurring. This leadership isn't static, perpetually invested in one or two individuals, but distributed dynamically based solely on the needs established within the music itself.

C4ORS is not a set of rehearsal tools to be implemented, but a sequential set of *objectives to be achieved*. The nature of the objectives is such that they cannot be communicated by fiat, but must be accomplished dialectically. With this in mind, the primary function of the individual "leading" the rehearsal (the facilitator), can be described as creating the correct conditions for each objective to be met. Three chief tasks emerge:

1. focusing listening. In other words, to initiate the C1 stage, that of Comprehension, effectively by prioritizing and clarifying problems within the music
2. maintaining a balance between optimization of each of the stages and efficient use of time
3. providing impartial, factual feedback or observations on the technical and artistic outcomes of all stages

Function 1. comprises the greatest part of the facilitator's remit, and can manifest in many ways. An experienced facilitator will deploy different approaches of varying degrees of intervention, depending on context and the relative degree of skill of the musicians to support collective problem solving in ensemble playing.

²⁶ Khodyakov, "The complexity of trust-control relationships in creative organizations: Insights from a qualitative analysis of a conductorless orchestra."

²⁷ Donald Glowinski, Leonardo Badino, A. Ausilio, Antonio Camurri, and Luciano Fadiga, "Analysis of leadership in a string quartet, Third International Workshop on Social Behaviour in Music at ACM ICMi 2012, pp. 763-774.

²⁸ Renee Timmers, Satoshi Endo, Adrian Bradbury, and Alan M. Wing, "Synchronization and leadership in string quartet performance: a case study of auditory and visual cues," *Frontiers in Psychology* 5 (2014): 645.

These can include:

- a. Requesting repetition of a passage. Musicians experienced in the C4 protocol will frequently deduce that the request itself indicates a problem and will pay closer attention to the delivery of the passage, in some cases recognizing deficiencies and negotiating corrections instinctively during the first repetition.
- b. Identifying the problem verbally. This act directly focuses the attention of the musician on the specific issue to be resolved, and is required more frequently with less experienced groups. If multiple issues need to be addressed, the facilitator may need to prioritize them according to their importance in promoting comprehension. Accuracy of rhythm is almost always the first step, as most other issues are impossible to solve without temporal coordination. In terms of how the issue is addressed, experience has demonstrated it is sufficient to request that the musicians simply agree on the identified performative element, without providing further direction.
- c. Isolating smaller groups in larger ensembles and sequencing the addition of other groups. This step can be applied to different instrumental sections in an orchestra, like isolation of the first violin section, or it can involve collating single musicians from multiple sections, like the string principals. The latter method is extremely effective in helping musicians hear and understand complex interrelation of parts. Temporary reduction of personnel to chamber configurations can also produce clarity of balance or insight into stylistic consideration.
- d. Introducing artificial alterations temporarily into the musical environment. This is a form of “scaffolding”, distinguished by any request that musicians play differently from the printed music. Examples could be requesting a slower tempo to aid precision of rhythm or consistency of note length, playing more quietly to assist in finding balance, or changing articulations and increasing dynamic of a part or parts to expose key rhythmic elements. Reversion to the original printed music should eventually follow.

Unlike the C4 stages which, despite some overlap, can only be achieved in sequence, these potential approaches are not necessarily successive: a facilitator can deploy them independently or in any combination depending on the challenges being addressed. It bears repeating that the objective of each of these actions on the part of the facilitator is not to offer solutions, but to clarify the problem(s) through listening, whether through environmental or musical

modification. The solutions are generated by the musicians. The involvement of a facilitator throughout these stages, particularly one who is giving instructions to guide the process, can produce the false impression that absolute control is once again vested in a single individual. This is the simple conflation of authoritarianism with authority. The facilitator has, by necessity, the authority to structure the environment to promote listening, but has limited involvement in the final artistic outcome. There are three crucial distinctions between a C4 facilitator and a conventional conductor:

	C4 Facilitator	Conductor
<i>focuses on</i>	Process	Product
<i>emphasizes</i>	Sound	Sight
<i>relies on</i>	Consensus	Command

None of this should be presumed to suggest that a C4 facilitator can be any less prepared for a rehearsal than a conventional conductor. If anything, being effective in a process-guiding role takes as much prior study of musical materials and thought dedicated towards rehearsal as does conducting. The C4 facilitator just approaches the score through the means listed above.

In practice, there appears to be no problem that a C4 oriented process cannot resolve, even the first and most significant challenge of all that has, in itself, justified the existence of the conductor in the past: that of initiating the performance. In this example, the C4 stages might be achieved through the following actions:

1. Comprehension:

- clarification of which musicians are performing at the start. (technique b. above)
- determination of which musicians exercise control of the tempo. (b. and c.) Tempo is not defined by the onset of the first pitch, but by the interval between the first pitch and the next discernible metered entry. Typically, the musicians with the shortest metered interval or intervals are those with the practical capacity to influence the tempo.

- the group or groups identified in the second bullet point are informed of practical consequences of their choices of tempo, how too slow a tempo may make bowing or breath control problematic, or too fast a tempo may make rapid passages unplayable.
2. Coordination:
 - The musicians controlling the tempo attempt to initiate the work and set a tempo solely through the pursuit of agreement in their playing. (c. and a.) This is typically achieved in two to three attempts. Experience has shown that visual coordination is *not* required: accurate initial pitch onset can be achieved simply through attention to a loosely coordinated yet untimed natural inhalation.
 - If necessary, an artificial modification may be introduced, (d.) such as playing with more aggressive articulations, to temporarily provide more data to inform the coordination process.
 3. Consolidation:
 - The tempo “solution” is repeated (a.) perhaps initially only with the groups setting the tempo, but ultimately with the full ensemble (c.) for the purposes of reinforcing it, and building a level of comfort and security. Any temporary modifications previously introduced are phased out. (d.)
 4. Creation
 - With the conditions for setting the tempo fully understood, the musicians now know how to coordinate the start of the work, whom to listen to, and what additional factors limit their effective choices. Each time the piece is initiated, the tempo will be renegotiated, but as a group decision, and not one imposed by a single figure. Full comprehension of the problem allows for near-instantaneous negotiation, and full ownership of the process allows the group to adjust immediately for external factors like fatigue or changes in acoustics between rehearsal and performance venues.

A considerable defect in the Orpheus model identified previously is the time investment required. Superficially, the nature of the C4 process appears to require a similar commitment, but counterintuitively, the outcome is often

an increase in efficiency. Following the downbeat of a conductor is a learned behaviour and subjective, demanding additional musician mental resources.²⁹ Less-experienced musicians frequently struggle to find consensus with the visual gesture, and true precision can be challenging for them to achieve even on multiple attempts. But when problems in an ensemble are addressed through the C4 process, the musicians are given the tools and the context in which to address and resolve the issue independently from that point forward, and in a manner sensitive or responsive to environmental issues.

An example of efficiencies achieved through C4 might be the adjustment of intonation for a single wind player. A directive approach would involve gestural indication upwards or downwards from the conductor until the proper intonation was achieved. This method is only feasible in a rehearsal environment, not in performance, meaning the instrumentalist is bereft of that guidance when it is most important. More problematically, since intonation is never consistent for a group from rehearsal to rehearsal to performance, the directive method would need to be repeated every time the passage was rehearsed, consuming time. The comprehension-based approach would take a little longer at the outset, but properly managed, would resolve the problem in perpetuity. The facilitator would isolate the key contextual pitches (technique c. above) in the ensemble the instrumentalist needs to hear in order to adjust the intonation correctly and independently. In so doing, the facilitator would simultaneously identify *for the remainder of the ensemble* which voices were the most essential in the texture and therefore help the ensemble rebalance appropriately. The issue of balance and intonation is no longer a subjectively determined abstraction from the podium, but is now an objectively established practical necessity, for which all members of the ensemble must take some responsibility. The group dynamic has changed from “that instrumentalist isn’t playing in tune” to “if I don’t do my job effectively and sensitively, that instrumentalist *can’t* play in tune.” The problem has been solved permanently in all performing conditions through collective ownership of the solution.

Effectiveness and Outcomes

If the C4ORS process is properly managed and implemented, its ultimate manifestation is not just an ensemble that can play effectively without a conductor, but one that can play sophisticated full-length works without any visual contact between the musicians. This has been demonstrated in live performance by university groups trained in this methodology at the Music

²⁹ Ono Kentaro, Akinori Nakamura, and Burkhard Maess, “Keeping an eye on the conductor: neural correlates of visuo-motor synchronization and musical experience,” *Frontiers of Human Neuroscience*, 02 April 2015. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2015.00154>

Education Revolution Conference (London 2015), the International Society for Music Perception and Cognition Conference (San Francisco, 2016), the International Society of Music Education Conference (Glasgow 2016), and the World Alliance for Arts Education Conference (Auckland, 2017). At all these events, technically and musically challenging late-Romantic quartets or quintets of mixed instruments (winds, strings, and piano) were performed from start to finish by musicians denied any visual contact with each other, seated in a back-to-back configuration. Invitations for the opportunity in Glasgow were issued after a highly competitive peer-review process, speaking to the quality of the performance achieved.

Further validation of artistic outcomes was derived from a research study in which audio samples of the ensembles playing in both inward and out-ward facing configurations were rated by reviewers uninformed of the performance mode.³⁰ In all cases, the samples performed with members facing outward, unable to see each other, were either deemed either equal in quality to the ensemble with internal visual contact, or significantly *better*. (p ranges from 0.019 to <0.0001).

Qualitative considerations aside, the primary question must be whether the C4ORS process meets its original remit to offer an intellectually inclusive, equitable approach to music making. This investigation was initiated in 2016 at a state county honors orchestra event in which over 130 string players were convened for rehearsals and a performance. Over 8 hours of rehearsal the musicians were prepared exclusively using the tenets of the C4 approach, culminating in a performance presented in full without a conductor. The flat platform in the venue, in combination with the very high number of participants, made sightlines across the ensemble extremely difficult and rendered conductor substitution, designated or otherwise, impractical, if not impossible. The event therefore also allowed real-world testing of the process with an extremely large group encompassing a wide range of musical skills.

Following the performance, participants with prior history in the honors orchestra ($n=63$) to compare were asked questions by the organizers about their experience. A full 97% characterized the experience with the clinician as either different (37%) or extremely different (60%), confirming the originality of the approach. 82% of respondents reported paying more or significantly more attention to the proceedings than they normally do, with the two groups evenly split at 41%. When asked about how important they felt to the success of the performance, 70% stated they felt either pretty important (44%) or very important (26%). These numbers were similar to their sentiments about their performances with their own school orchestras (49% and 29%) – but it must be noted that the honors orchestra event combined the ensembles of 5 different schools, so preserving the participants' sense of contribution in a context of

³⁰ Govias - currently in preparation for publication.

five times as many musicians represents a significant finding. Finally, 89% of musicians reported that they enjoyed the experience more (41%) or much more (48%) than usual.

In the context of the questionnaire, inclusivity may be triangulated between enjoyment, in consideration of studies associating satisfaction with musical agency; sense of personal importance to the performance; and their level of intellectual engagement, here described as “paying attention.” In all these metrics significant scores were achieved, suggested the C4 approach represents an important step towards a functional model of inclusivity. C4ORS does not inform a musical leadership model, but an environmental management model, as it must if it is to address effectively the large ensemble’s history of authoritarianism and exclusion.

Reception and reaction

In its many public examples of implementation and execution, the C4 process has prompted a wide range of reactions and responses, not just from participants but from external observers. Participant reaction has been uniformly positive: both the qualitative and quantitative feedback received from the 2016 county honors orchestra was overwhelming favorable, as already noted, with similar results in other implementations.

Observer reaction has been mixed. When the C4 process was deployed with a middle school state honors orchestra in 2021, a member of the organizing committee decried it as a scandal, even though the 60-piece ensemble performed in the very least to the same standard without a conductor as its twin orchestra, which performed with a conductor immediately after. This reaction has been common. There exists a faction of music educators who believe that pedagogical impact and effectiveness for an ensemble can only come through conventional conducting on a podium. This is unsurprising in the context of the literature on leadership. Numerous researchers investigating leadership, particularly in the orchestral environment, have also noted its essential corollary of followership, the impetus to obey unquestioningly any directive given by an individual ostensibly in a position of power.^{31,32,33}

Given the default leadership mode of most large ensembles, the culture and behavior of followership is deeply ingrained in ensemble musicians from an early age, with the result that deviation from its strictures is viewed as unprofessional

³¹ Yaakov Atik, “The conductor and the orchestra: Interactive aspects of the leadership process,” *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* (1994).

³² Sabine Boerner, Diana Krause, and Diether Gebert, “Leadership and co-operation in orchestras.,” *Human Resource Development International* 7, no. 4 (2004): 465-479.

³³ Donald Vredenburg, Irene Yunxia He. “Leadership lessons from a conductorless orchestra,” *Business Horizons*, Volume 46, Issue 5 (2003):19-24.

or ineffective, regardless of artistic outcomes. It is reasonable to expect most music educators to carry over these beliefs, no matter how contradictory they are to known best practices in education. One researcher even noted that autocratic podium direction is not just expected, but respected and appreciated by some professional musicians who have been trained to believe their function is solely to execute the intention of a conductor.³⁴ But any suggestion that the students have received less of any experience is false: the pedagogy, the personality, and as importantly, the values of a C4 facilitator are on full display from the outset throughout the rehearsal process. The primary change is that both authority and ownership of the performance are now vested in the musicians, not the conductor.

Other reactions seek to rationalize a C4-based performance as unique to the circumstance, functional for the demonstrating students but impractical for most others. In reality, there appears to be no skill floor for this process. C4 has been effectively deployed from beginning, notation-illiterate string students in the Venezuelan Andes through to experienced university-level groups in the United States. C4 often proves more immediately effective with less experienced students because it relieves the participants of the responsibility of looking to a podium, grappling as they are with their instruments and the music notation in front of them. Demanding obeisance to a baton fights their instinct to listen, whereas C4 actively leverages it. Which approach then yields better outcomes is not surprising.

Some negative or dismissive responses from music educators and conductors may reflect the psychological need for their own literal self-centrality in their work. Other negative reactions can be attributed to the entirely false, equally fear-driven assumption that C4 represents an all-or-nothing approach. The function of C-Oriented Rehearsing isn't to replace a conductor, or to render one obsolete, but to complement existing best practices and to offer educators additional tools to improve inclusivity practices in the rehearsal room, without compromising artistic outcomes or occupying excessive rehearsal time. However, in music, tradition runs deep and there is distrust of any method that may appear divergent. But with the emergence of DEI values as an impetus for change, relinquishment of some of the power of the podium is no longer merely an act of altruism, but a moral and ethical imperative for all educators.

³⁴ Atik, "The conductor and the orchestra: Interactive aspects of the leadership process" (1994).

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE LEADERSHIP STYLES OF TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE ONE-ACT PLAY DIRECTORS

Introduction

As the conduit between the actor, the audience, and the script, the director's influence on production stakeholders and the audience's experience is undeniable (Brestoff & Richard, 1996; Knowles, 2015). The theatrical director is the creative visionary, the lead teacher, and the team mascot all in one package (Mitchell, 2008). When directors work to create theatre within a school setting, they invest in the lives of students in extraordinary ways through "meaningful socialization" activities and by providing opportunities for students to engage in experiences that expose them to different cultures, languages, and traditions (Gonzalez, 2013). The work of the theatre educator is done in the classroom, evidenced on the stage, and evaluated by all (Bloom, 2001). This article reviews the findings of a quantitative study that investigated the leadership characteristics of Texas high school theatre directors and their experience in the University Interscholastic League (UIL) One-Act Play (OAP) competition. The study addressed the research gap in directorial leadership and focused on the impact of directorial leadership on production success.

Background

Artistic leadership is not an innate skill. Artistic leadership must be taught. Directors must be adaptable and empathetic to inspire others to invest themselves in artistic endeavors (Cohen, 2011). Unless leadership skills are taught, theatrical directors will direct using historical traditions without input from modern methodologies, research, and applications (Brestoff & Richard, 1996; Hauser & Reich, 2018; Romanska, 2014). Research on leadership supports the mindset that quality leaders learn to lead through education, experience, and mentorship ("Leaders Are Made Not Born," 2008; Depree, 1989; Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Shannon et al., 2020). However, a lack of research and the perception of artistic temperament and subjective content perpetuates the idea that a director's creative behaviors and traits are innate, not learned (Wah, 2017). Theatre scholar Ric Knowles, author of *Fundamentals of Directing* (2015), argues otherwise. While theatre historians have often described artistic directors as flamboyant tyrants, promising directors today must be collaborative, educated, and mentored (Brockett, 1991; Cohen, 2011; Knowles, 2015; Lazarus, 2012; Noland & Richards, 2014; Roznowski & Domer, 2016).

Literature Review

A director's leadership style impacts the theatrical production experience

(Mitchell, 2008). The theatre director influences stakeholders across all areas, including acting, designing, technical work, management, and the audience experience (Brestoff & Richard, 1996; Knowles, 2015). Exemplary leaders understand that their leadership approach depends on their role, setting, and audience (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). The same applies in theatre, as directors utilize different leadership styles based on their position within the organization, the theatrical environment, the stakeholders within the production, and their audience (Bloom, 2001; Hodge & McLain, 2009; Mitchell, 2008).

Theatre directors face leadership challenges due to the lack of leadership training available within the industry (Bloom, 2001). Artistic leadership training tends to focus on task and facility management rather than teaching leadership principles or skills (Adler, 2006; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Stein & Bathurst, 2008; Webb, 2020). While over one thousand higher education institutions in the United States grant degrees in general drama and theater arts, most programs do not have a leadership component within the curriculum (Data USA, 2019; General Drama & Theater Arts, 2020). The absence of leadership principles in the curriculum is only a small part of the gap in director training. The reality is that of the over 2 million bachelor's degrees awarded in 2019 in the United States, less than 9,000 were in drama and theatre (Data USA, 2019). More problematic is that only 133 bachelor's degrees were in directing (U.S. Department of Education & National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). With the demand for directors projected to grow by 24% from 2020 to 2030, with over 15,000 job openings each year, the need significantly outpaces directing graduates (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). While the number of trained and classically educated directors may be small, the use of directing techniques within education and corporate training is extensive. The question becomes, given the lack of directing graduates, where are directors learning to direct, and how are directors learning to lead?

About the Study

The target population chosen for this study was theatre directors from Texas high schools that participate in the state's extracurricular theatre program called the University Interscholastic League One-Act Play (UIL OAP) Contest. UIL OAP is the world's largest high school play production contest, made up of over 300 contests each year. The annual State Meet comprises the top forty-eight plays (eight from each of the six classifications) that have advanced through up to five rounds of competition. Ultimately, one production in each of the six enrollment classifications wins the State Championship (UIL, n.d.-b). Each spring, more than 14,000 Texas high school students participate in the most prominent play contest in the world as part of the UIL OAP Contest

(UIL, n.d.-b). UIL OAP comprises more than 1,300 plays representing school districts across Texas, from the smallest high school, Valentine, with eight high school students, to Allen High School, with an enrollment of 6,959 students (UIL, 2022). Each participating school, no matter enrollment size, can list up to four adults who are full-time employees representing the school district as directors. However, many directors lack foundational arts-based pedagogy, directorial knowledge, and leadership training (Lazarus, 2012). Texas does not require UIL OAP directors to be certified teachers, have degrees, or have experience in theatre (UIL, 2021). With over 360,000 teachers in Texas and less than 2% certified theatre teachers, the lack of directorial credentialing poses a potential disadvantage to students in schools without knowledgeable directors (N. Camarillo, personal communication, February 11, 2022; TEA, 2020). Little research exists on teaching, directing, and leading students in UIL OAP. Since UIL OAP was established in 1927, theatre has been a part of many Texas high schools. The growth in theatre programs made the need for educational theatre standards (Cooper, 1971). Texas Educational Theatre Association (TETA) was established in 1951 to help codify teaching standards for theatre education (TETA, 2022). As a result of TETA's efforts, Texas became the first state to require minimum teaching standards for secondary theatre educators. In 1966, the Texas Education Agency established drama as a unique course taught in the discipline of fine arts (Cooper, 1971). The increased demand for theatre education courses eventually led to, in 1988, Texas administering the first theatre teaching certification in the United States (TETA, 2022).

The number of Texas teachers with theatre degrees or theatre teaching certificates currently directing UIL OAP is unknown. UIL does not request this information from school districts, as the only requirement is that the director(s) be under a full-time contract for the school year (UIL, 2020). A public information request to the Texas Education Agency showed that 8,661 people in Texas hold current theatre certification of some type. However, this number includes over 4,100-lifetime certificates dating back to 1955 (N. Camarillo, personal communication, February 11, 2022). With over 90% of eligible member schools enrolling in OAP, the gap between credentialed and educated theatre directors and the need is significant (Stevens, 2010; UIL, 2022). The quest for competitive success combined with a scarcity of resources leaves some schools without knowledgeable directors. The general lack of credentialed and experienced theatre teachers available to direct UIL OAP is felt in all aspects of the student experience (Saxton, 2016). Without knowledge of theatre and directing, those who take on the responsibility of UIL OAP often struggle with contest expectations. The directors must learn to direct and lead groups through on-the-job experiences (Butterworth, 2013, Gotuaco, 2006; Pettigrew, 1968). Exacerbating the problem is the reality that UIL OAP is an

extra-curricular activity, and budgets are determined by school administrators outside of the state's foundational school funding (Swaby, 2019). The disparity of resources creates additional directing challenges (Crescencio, 2019; UIL, n.d.-b). The challenges that directors face cause some directors to take a more personalized student-focused leadership approach while other directors take a more traditionally autocratic directorial approach (Cohen, 2011; Gotuaco, 2006; Stevens, 2010; Ziegler, 1987). Further, the general lack of leadership principles taught in the teacher education curriculum creates a gap in classroom management perpetuated within fine arts education (Lester, 2014; NAST, 2020; Wah, 2017).

Leadership Theories Applied to Fine Arts

Theatre has long been used to showcase and debate leadership attributes and attitudes (Küpers, 2004). Traditional leadership attributes such as modeling appropriate behavior, inspiring others to work towards a shared vision, and promoting a collaborative environment relate to leadership as a performing art (Biehl-Missal, 2010; Depree, 1989; Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Küpers, 2004). The metaphor of the leader as an artist is applicable by focusing on the symbolic and relational aspects of leadership. Moreover, this comparison refers to the environment as the stage, the followers as the audience, and the leader as the performer (Abdourrahmane, 2019; Sinha, 2010). Leadership attitudes and practices such as being confident and approachable correlate with acting activities whereby the leader "finds" their leadership style through self-reflection and visualization activities (Spooner & John, 2020; Tichy, 2007). Some researchers say that the creativity and innovation of theatre provide a leadership framework, going so far as to create a matrix framework for artful creation for leaders (Flamand et al., 2021; Ibbotson & Darsø, 2008). Studies show that creative attributes taught using theatre activities can produce practical results and transformational leaders (Biehl-Missal, 2010; Sohmen, 2015; Spooner & John, 2020). Yet these same attributes do not necessarily translate to transformational directors. Available historical accounts describe directors as primarily autocratic while, at times, benevolent leaders (Cohen, 2011; Ziegler, 1987). Understanding that the director is a creator of communities, a bridge between the world of the playwright's words and the actor's physical expressions of character, helps explain why directing is both leading and art (Bloom, 2001; Cohen, 2011).

As the bridge between script and performance, it is a risk every time the director determines the movements and emotions for a scene. The director knows that their decisions will be understood by some actors and audience members and lost on others. While playwrights offer suggestions for staging, the director's role is to bring these ideas to life. Directors must research the playwright, the

genre, and the themes inside the script to determine the production style. Once the research is complete, the director begins to create the art. Yet creating the art requires the director to communicate the artistic vision and the aesthetic choices to stakeholders (Mitchell, 2008; Wind, 1925). For many directors, communicating the artistic vision while being the production leader is difficult.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership, developed first by James MacGregor Burns, is based on inspiring followers to embrace shifts or changes in beliefs, needs, and values (Burns, 2003; Northouse, 2021). Transformational leaders challenge stakeholders to unify for a common goal, reach beyond what was initially thought possible, and consider each stakeholder as an individual (Balwant, 2016; Bass & Bass, 2009; Hamilton, 2021). Transformational Leadership includes four dimensions: Idealized Influence (Attributes and Behaviors), Individualized Considerations, Inspirational Motivation, and Intellectual Stimulation (Bass & Bass, 2009). Transformational Leadership is a widely researched leadership philosophy and one of the most frequently studied leadership styles in fine arts and educational settings (Leithwood et al., 2019; Shava & Heystek, 2021). Transformational school leaders set the direction for the organization through a shared vision (Inspirational Motivation), build relationships and develop people (Individualized Consideration), support the desired practices of the organization by fostering collaboration and shared responsibilities (Intellectual Stimulation), and support the work that is carried out by teachers and staff (Idealized Influence) (Leithwood et al., 2019). In terms of theatre management, Transformational Leadership gives people closest to the observation level to a needed change the authority to implement said change (Rhine, 2006). When leaders recognize stakeholders as significant contributors to the organization, the leader utilizes Idealized Influence.

Full Range of Leadership Model

Transformational Leadership is the philosophy of leaders tapping into the motives of followers to reach the desired goals of the leader (Northouse, 2021). Transformational Leadership is part of a continuum of leadership called the Full Range Leadership Model, which includes the components of Transformational, Transactional, and non-leadership behaviors known as Passive Avoidant (Avolio & Bass, 2002). The Full Range model addresses effective and ineffective practices and active and passive attributes (Northouse, 2021). The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is used to assess characteristics in leaders as applied to the Full Range of Leadership model (Bass & Bass, 2009). The strength of this model is that it is well known, accepted, and normed. The Full Range of Leadership model allows for a wide range of leadership behaviors. The model is

broad, encompassing most leadership activities. An example of the breadth of the model is the ability to describe both positive/ exemplary and negative/avoidant leadership practices within the Full Range of Leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Northouse, 2021).

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), designed by Bass and Avolio (2022), was the survey used for this study. The MLQ measures the nine characteristics that encompass the Full Range of Leadership Model and identifies three outcomes of leadership behavior: Extra Effort, Effectiveness, and Satisfaction. The MLQ, 5X Short, as referred to in the manual, has been extensively validated and normed since its preliminary results were published in 1999. The validity holds through an additional fourteen separate studies (Bass & Avolio, 2004). The reliability for the total items on the MLQ ranges from .74 to .94 and is based on a total sample size of $N = 27,285$. Researchers use Confirmatory Factor Analysis to determine the factor items' goodness of fit (GFI). The GFI for the nine-factor model within the United States for self-raters is 0.93 (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

As the MLQ holds validity across various organizations, cultures, and languages, this was an appropriate instrument to examine UIL OAP directors' leadership styles. Further, as an instrument designed for use with self-rating of leadership behaviors, the MLQ establishes validity to artistic leadership behaviors not typically discussed. While the MLQ structure identifies the Full Range of Leadership which includes nine styles of leadership, six of which are subgroups, this study is focused on Transformational, Transactional, and Passive Avoidant unless the data from the survey identified a subgroup as a statistically significant area of research. Focusing on the three main types of leadership identified by Bass and Avolio (1995, 2002, 2004) aligns this study with similar research studies (Balwant, 2016; Barnes et al., 2014; Jodar i Solà et al., 2016). In addition to the Full Range attributes, an examination of the three leadership outcomes: Extra Effort, Effectiveness, and Satisfaction, provide a statistical link between the literature on artistic leadership and success in UIL OAP.

The MLQ has a self-rating form with 45 questions on a 5-point Likert-type scale that measure self-perception of leadership behaviors and assesses the Full Range of Leadership styles. Copyright permission was obtained from Mind Garden Inc. to use and distribute the MLQ for a nominal fee per user (Mind Garden Inc, 2022).

The Study and the Findings

The non-experimental correlational quantitative study aimed to determine the difference between the director's education, experience, and leadership style. Additionally, the study sought to determine if there was a relationship between the director's leadership characteristics and the success of their productions. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient revealed significant relationships between leadership scores and success in UIL OAP. The five characteristics (IA, IB, IM, IS, IC) that make up the Transformational Leadership score were statistically significant for all advancing categories. Similarly, the score for Transactional Leadership, which consists of Contingent Reward and Management-By-Exception Active, was statistically significant in all advancing categories. The score for the Passive Avoidant non-leadership style of Management-By-Exception Passive and Laissez Faire were negatively correlated for advancing categories.

The study's results were consistent with the studies of leaders and success in other fields (Balwant, 2016; Mao et al., 2020; Vandenberghe et al., 2002). Two separate meta-analyses of the MLQ related to performance revealed similar findings to the study of theatre directors and their UIL OAP success (Balwant, 2016; Deinert et al., 2015). The meta-analysis showed that Idealized Influence, the combination of Idealized Influence - Attributes and Idealized Influence - Behaviors, was directly related to mentoring stakeholders, while Inspirational Motivation (IM) was directly related to performance (Deinert et al., 2015). The study of UIL OAP directors is consistent with these results, as directors who scored high in IM positively correlated with advancing to area and region competitions (Balwant, 2016; Deinert et al., 2015; Mao et al., 2020; Vandenberghe et al., 2002).

The results provide insights for directors and programs alike. In a discussion with a twenty-year veteran theatre director who wanted to understand her leadership style in comparison to her contest results revealed that her style of transformational leadership, which focuses on building collegiality and team building, correlated to her initial success in the early rounds of competition, but was an indicator of her lack of advancing in the late rounds. To advance to the state competition, she needed to also employ contingent rewards and be willing to make some difficult transactional leadership moves. Through the discussion, she was able to see that while she may not advance to the top rounds of the competition, her inclusive leadership style is not "bad."

Implications of Future Study

The results reveal a need for further study of directors and their leadership styles. The use of meta-analyses and a review of the literature ensured validity and protection against internal and external threats (Balwant, 2016; Deinert et al., 2015; Mao et al., 2020; Vandenberghe et al., 2002; Wu et al., 2012). The self-

reported leadership styles are just a starting point in the discussion of leadership and production success. The addition of the MLQ's multi-rater survey which would provide stakeholder feedback of the director's leadership style would offer additional insights.

Additionally, theatre education programs should consider including leadership theories and principles in the curriculum. At minimum, including leadership training for directors would provide a better understanding of the impact of directorial leadership on stakeholders and audiences. The implications of the study offer a starting place for future research. Opportunities exist for teacher-leaders, theatrical directors, and knowledgeable UIL OAP directors (Adler, 2006; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Stein, 2016; Stein & Bathurst, 2008; Webb, 2020).

Table 1*Demographic Characteristics of UIL OAP Directors*

Characteristic		<i>n</i>	%
Sex	Female	172	72.0
	Male	62	25.9
	Prefer not to say	5	2.1
Age	20-29	25	10.5
	30-39	66	28.2
	40-49	51	21.8
	50-59	47	20.1
	60-69	33	14.1
	70 Plus	12	5
	No answer	5	2.1
	Years in Education	1 year	6
	2 to 3 years	7	2.9
	4 to 7 years	34	14.2
	8 to 10 years	36	15.1
	11 to 14 years	29	12.1
	15 to 19 years	25	10.5
	20 to 24 years	31	13
	25 to 29 years	33	13.8
	30 to 34 years	21	8.8
	35 plus years	17	7.1
Years as a UIL OAP Director	1 year	11	4.6
	2 to 3 years	34	14.2
	4 to 7 years	57	23.8
	8 to 10 years	34	14.2
	11 to 14 years	27	11.3
	15 to 19 years	34	14.2
	20 to 24 years	16	6.7
	25 to 29 years	14	5.9
	30 to 34 years	4	1.7
	35 plus years	7	2.9

Note. *N* = 239.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for UIL OAP Director's Leadership Styles

Attribute	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>n</i>
IA Average	3.26	0.50	238
IB Average	3.54	0.46	239
IM Average	3.53	0.38	237
IS Average	3.39	0.51	239
IC Average	3.64	0.37	238
CR	3.43	0.49	239
MBEA	1.82	0.80	239
MBEP	1.22	0.67	239
LF	0.85	0.64	239
Extra Effort	3.45	0.54	237
Effectiveness	3.41	0.50	237
Satisfaction	3.45	0.54	237
Transformational Average Score	3.47	0.31	237
Transactional Average Score	3.53	0.37	239
Passive Avoidant Average Score	0.85	0.64	239

Note. *n* = number of responses.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Level of Success in UIL OAP Competition

Advancement	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>n</i>
Never advanced out of first round of competition	2.99	3.94	190
Advanced to District (if a Zone competitor)	6.66	7.84	172
Advanced to Bi-district	4.21	4.55	197
Advanced to Area	5.35	7.01	218
Advanced to Region	3.59	5.47	205
State Competitor	1.36	2.68	200

Note. *n* = number of responses.

Table 4*Relationship Between Leadership Style and Success in UIL*

Attribute	Inferential Statistic	NA	AD	AB	AA	AR	SC
IA Average	Pearson Correlation	.05	.27	.23	.31	.29	.18
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.53	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*	.01*
	<i>n</i>	189	172	196	217	205	200
IB Average	Pearson Correlation	.02	.17	.15	.18	.20	.10
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.77	.13	.03*	.01*	.01*	.17
	<i>n</i>	190	172	197	218	205	200
IM Average	Pearson Correlation	<.001	.11	.09	.15	.15	.06
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.00	.16	.23	.03*	.04*	.43
	<i>n</i>	188	171	195	217	204	199
IS Average	Pearson Correlation	-.01	.12	.06	.12	.14	.08
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.91	.11	.43	.08	.04*	.27
	<i>n</i>	190	172	197	218	205	200
IC Average	Pearson Correlation	-.06	.17	.07	.24	.28	.23
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.41	.03*	.31	<.001*	<.001*	<.001*
	<i>n</i>	189	171	196	217	204	199
MBEA	Pearson Correlation	.07	<.001	-.10	<.001	.05	.07
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.34	.98	.16	.99	.49	.32
	<i>n</i>	190	172	197	218	205	200
MBEP	Pearson Correlation	.07	-.07	-.07	-.10	-.05	-.02
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.31	.35	.31	.13	.47	.73
	<i>n</i>	190	172	197	218	205	200
LF	Pearson Correlation	.07	-.14	-.18	-.20	-.14	-.07
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.36	.06	.01*	<.001*	.04*	.35
	<i>n</i>	190	172	197	218	205	200

Attribute	Inferential Statistic	NA	AD	AB	AA	AR	SC
CR	Pearson Correlation	-.04	.14	.18	.22	.22	.13
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.60	.08	.01*	<.001*	<.001*	.07
	<i>n</i>	190	172	197	218	205	200
Extra Effort	Pearson Correlation	<.001	.10	.16	.25	.23	.15
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.96	.18	.03*	<.001*	<.001*	.03*
	<i>n</i>	188	171	195	216	203	198
Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	-.03	.09	.16	.19	.16	.06
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.66	.24	.02*	.01*	.02*	.37
	<i>n</i>	188	171	195	216	203	198
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.02	.05	.10	.13	.11	.05
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.76	.53	.17	.06*	.11	.48
	<i>n</i>	188	171	195	216	203	198
Transformational Average Score	Pearson Correlation	.01	.23	.18	.28	.30	.18
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.92	<.001*	.01*	<.001*	<.001*	.01*
	<i>n</i>	188	171	195	217	204	199
Transactional Average Score	Pearson Correlation	-.05	.18	.16	.26	.28	.19
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.53	.02*	.02*	<.001*	<.001*	.01*
	<i>n</i>	190	172	197	218	205	200
Passive Avoidant	Pearson Correlation	.07	-.14	-.18	-.20	-.14	-.07
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.36	.06	.01*	<.001*	.04*	.35
	<i>n</i>	190	172	197	218	205	200

Note. *n* = Number of participants. * = $p > .05$.

NA= Never Advancing out of First Round of Competition, AD = Advanced to District (if a Zone competitor), AB = Advanced to Bi-district, AA = Advanced to Area, AR = Advanced to Region, SC = State Competitor.

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**AFTER GRADUATION — CAREERS IN THE ARTS?
WHAT CONSTITUTES SUCCESS? HOW TO DESIGN A LIFE?
ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF FIRST GENERATION AND
BIPOC STUDENTS?**

This article aims to identify some traditional barriers to first generation students (who are often students of color) in the performing arts and examine evolving challenges and needs in first generation student identification that needs viable supports. With some degree of brevity, this very timely topic touches on all three goals of this Journal.¹

All students studying in performing arts and the creative industries face unique challenges. Tepper and Lingo write, “*As catalysts of change and innovation, artistic workers face special challenges managing ambiguity, developing and sustaining a creative identity, and forming community in the context of an individually based enterprise economy.*”² The unique challenges are even more significant for first-generation and BIPOC students. That is the premise of this article.

Plentiful data from the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP)

The inspiration that led to this submission comes from the reports, research, and scholarly work informed by the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP). Over 200,000 arts alumni have participated in various stages of these surveys for over 20 years.³ Another influence comes from the work of Farouk Dey, a higher education and talent development executive with two decades of experience leading and transforming university organizations using innovations in technology, experiential learning, design thinking, community engagement, and resource development. He is the founding Vice Provost for Integrative Learning and Life Design at Johns Hopkins University. He leads 15 units that bridge curricular and experiential learning with professional ambitions and mentoring for all undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and alums across the university’s nine schools.⁴ A third factor is 22+ years of design, performing, and arts leadership at flagship public, private, and regional institutions. The last 16 of those years were as a dean at three different institutions — who often heard the senior leadership’s call to be “visionary,”

¹ Promoting scholarship applicable to performing arts leadership. 2. Providing juried research in performing arts leadership, and 3) disseminating information, ideas, and experiences in performing arts leadership.

² Lingo, E. L., & Tepper, S. J. (2013). Looking back, looking forward: Arts-based careers and creative work. *Work and Occupations*, 40(4), 337–363. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888413505229>

³ Noonan, D., & Field, T. (Eds.). (2021, December). SNAAP Casebook. Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP). Retrieved January 31, 2023, from <https://snaaparts.org/participants/case-studies>

⁴ Johns Hopkins University. (n.d.). *Farouk Dey*. Office of the Provost. Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://provost.jhu.edu/members/farouk-dey/>

“advance first generation students,” “support DEI,” “foster creativity and innovation,” “strengthen existing programs and developing new and innovative programs.” Those sometimes called to action are not always responded to with the necessary resources or support. Most troubling is that specific faculty can hold up or scuttle innovation or new programs when things get to the final stages.

Metrics on graduation rates are plentiful, and often, institutions themselves are collecting this data. In a SNAAP Focus Group Report, standard surveys were said to include: a) exit surveys that are typically organized by a central university office that tend to focus on macro insight about the university or college, b) some participants shared that their own institution collected valid student outcomes data, many commented that accessing the data and working with central offices has become more challenging as support staff have been steadily reduced, c) First-destination employment placement surveys, run either on an ad-hoc basis from individual departments or programs, or supported by institutional research or alumni offices, and d) Alumni surveys sent at key milestones post-degree — 6 months and 1-year to 2-years post-degree, but typically not after two years — run on an ad-hoc basis from individual departments or programs, or supported by institutional research or alumni offices, e) Word of mouth, alumni townhalls or events, or annual solicitations to alumni about current career and happenings for magazines, newsletters, and other alumni communications, f) Internal efforts to track alumni through their social media profiles, namely on professional platforms such as LinkedIn.⁵ Since 2008, SNAAP, the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project, has collected and analyzed data from over 200,000 arts graduates across North America. Over 300 colleges and universities have participated in the Study, and SNAAP data provides scholarly studies that aid in assessment, curriculum reform, recruitment, benchmarking, alumni engagement, advocacy, and more. SNAAP data help change the national conversation on the value of an arts degree.⁶

First generation students and their special challenges

The Center for First-Generation Student Success, a NASPA and The Suder Foundation initiative, publishes research and provides several definitions of first-generation students.⁷ The federal definition determines eligibility for Pell

⁵ Novak-Leonard, J. L., Dempster, D., Scotto Adams, L. A., & Walters, E. (2022, June). *Data, pressing needs, and most significant challenges: Insights from the field*. SNAAP Focus Group Report. Retrieved February 17, 2023, from <https://snaaparts.org/uploads/downloads/2022-SNAAP-Focus-Group-Report-with-cover.pdf>

⁶ Noonan, D., & Field, T. (Eds.). (2021, December). SNAAP Casebook. Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP). Retrieved January 31, 2023, from <https://snaaparts.org/participants/case-studies>

⁷ Center for First-generation Student Success, a NASPA and The Suder Foundation initiative. (2017, November 20). *Defining first-generation*. About the Center for First-generation Students. Retrieved February 16, 2023, from <https://firstgen.naspa.org/blog/defining-first-generation>

Grants and indicates that first generation students come from families where their biological parents did not complete a four-year college degree. Ultimately, “first generation” implies that students may lack the critical cultural capital necessary for college success because their parents did not attend college.⁸ According to the Postsecondary National Policy Institute, undergraduate students as first-generation students enrolled in the 2015–2016 academic year would be 37% white, 33% Latino, 19% African American, and 8% Asian American.⁹ “There is some disagreement about how to define the term first generation. NCES (2014) defines first generation college students as the first in their families to attend college. NCES (2018) defines first generation as students whose parents have not participated in postsecondary education. According to the Pell Institute, a first-generation student is a student whose parent or guardian did not attain a bachelor’s degree.”¹⁰

While first generation students are often quite academically skilled and make creative contributions in many ways to a campus community, navigating the tangled web of college policies, procedures, jargon, and expectations can be a challenge. In a recent book by author Rachel Gable, *The Hidden Curriculum: First Generation Students at Legacy Universities* (Princeton University Press, 2021), she states, “*The “hidden curriculum” is often described by education scholars as the set of unspoken rules in a formal educational context that insiders consider to be natural and universal. Those with prior knowledge of those unspoken rules are positioned to succeed because they have learned the rules before, and those with no or little prior knowledge need to realize when they are breaking the rules and how to use them to their advantage. This pervasive “hidden curriculum” can damage the confidence of first-generation students, lead to struggles in belonging, and result in departure.*”¹¹ Thus, an opportunity opens for institutions to provide additional support for these students so they may be as competitive and successful as their peers. At a 2023 workshop at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, Dr. Ann Amicucci presented a list of terms that may seem foreign to first generation

⁸ Center for First-generation Student Success, a NASPA and The Suder Foundation initiative. (2017, November 20). *Defining first-generation*. About the Center for First-generation Students. Retrieved February 16, 2023, from <https://firstgen.naspa.org/blog/defining-first-generation>

⁹ Postsecondary National Policy Institute. (2021). *First-generation students in Higher Education - PNPI*. FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION. Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://pnpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/FIRST-GENERATION-STUDENTS-IN-HIGHER-EDUCATION.pdf>

¹⁰ n.a. (2021, February 1). *Factsheets First Generation Students*. PNPI. Retrieved January 16, 2023, from <https://pnpi.org/first-generation-students/>

¹¹ Jaschik, S., & Gable, R. (2021, January 19). *The author discusses her new book on first-generation students*. The author discusses her new book on first-generation students at Harvard and Georgetown. Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/01/19/author-discusses-her-new-book-first-generation-students-harvard-and-georgetown>

students and students with English as a second language, “tuition, payment plan, program eligibility, academic year, financial aid, work-study, cutoff score, placement, Registrar, course code, credit hour, general degree requirement, GPA, Office Hour.”¹² Those are all a part of the hidden curriculum identified by Gable.¹³

Performing arts students

A traditional definition of performing arts is often limited to music, dance, or drama performed for a live audience.¹⁴ In a broader sense, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states, “*The performing arts range from vocal and instrumental music, dance and theatre to pantomime, sung verse and beyond. They include numerous cultural expressions that reflect human creativity and that are also found, to some extent, in many other intangible cultural heritage domains.*”¹⁵ Sociologist Rachel Skaggs studied artists and their responses to the conditions that COVID dictated. She wrote, “*Arts alumni used technology in new ways to make and market their artwork, enhance teaching pedagogies, create new revenue streams, maintain and expand their networks, and learn new arts and non-arts skills.*” She writes, “*Aside from these established skill needs, two broad categories of skill emerged as increasingly relevant compared to pre-pandemic artistic work: technological skills and skills related to interpersonal relationships and working collaboratively.*” She also cites the significant gaps that 20 years of SNAAP surveys have revealed, specifically entrepreneurship, business and financial skills, and interpersonal skills. Specifically, the most significant gaps between skills artists acquired or developed at their institution and those they need for their job (2015-2017). It may be argued that what Skaggs and her colleagues describe, is even more acute with first-gen students. The following are percentage differences between those who said skill was “very important” or “somewhat important” for their work and those who acquired “very much” or “some”: 58% financial and business management skills, 43% entrepreneurial skills, and 32% networking and relationship building.¹⁶

In higher education arts, first generation students are often disadvantaged—and students from a lower socio-economic background often enter performing

¹² Amicucci, A. (2023, February). *Revising Written Communication to Improve Access for First Generation Students and English Language Learners. University of Colorado Colorado Springs Teaching and Learning Conference.* Colorado Springs; University of Colorado Colorado Springs.

¹³ Gable, R. (2021). *The Hidden Curriculum: First generation students at legacy universities.* Princeton University Press.

¹⁴ Performing arts. (n.d.). Retrieved February 5, 2023, from <https://firsthand.co/industries/performing-arts>

¹⁵ UNESCO – *Performing Arts (such as traditional music, dance, and theatre).* IntangibleCultural Heritage. (n.d.). Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://ich.unesco.org/en/performing-arts-00054>

¹⁶ Skaggs, R., Hoppe, E., & Burke, M. J. (2021). *How covid-19 has impacted the needed skills of Arts Graduates: SNAAP Databrief Vol. 9, no. 2.* SNAAP DataBrief. Retrieved February 20, 2023, from <https://mailchi.mp/snaaparts.org/snaap-databrief-may2021-vol9-number2-covid-19-impact>

arts studies with domestic opposition (or skepticism) and have little familiarity with the resources for success, such as experiential learning (internships and externships), Study abroad, and potential summer employment that can advance their personal and professional development. According to Farouk Dey of Johns Hopkins University, “. . . we end up with a culture of haves and have-nots. Schools and colleges, for example, invest in a tremendous amount of resources and immersive experiences like internships, research, and study abroad. However, they are often on the periphery of the student learning experience. Students often must seek them out. The onus is on them to find the mentoring and to find the experiences necessary to be successful. These experiences are just too important to miss. They are the experiences that prepare students for the workforce, the experiences that expand students’ minds and expand their networks. They are the experiences that inspire students to make bold decisions and audacious moves.”¹⁷

Arts graduates working across disciplines

SNAAP devoted informative and illuminating research about first generation arts students, shown in DataBriefs Vol. 3 No. 8. The authors drew upon data from 67,978 undergraduate-level arts alums from 140 postsecondary institutions in the United States collected between 2011 and 2013.¹⁸ First generation students need to know the career needs for a creative practice that involves working across multiple art forms/disciplines. The SNAAP surveys administered in 2015, 2016, and 2017 asked undergraduate alumni who were current or former professional artists (26,672) the following yes/no question: “Since leaving [institution], has your artistic practice involved working across multiple art forms/disciplines?” Three-quarters (74%) of these arts alumni answered “yes.” Furthermore, alums who currently work as professional artists are significantly more likely to report being multi-disciplinary than those who no longer work in occupations where they create or perform art.¹⁹ SNAAP DataBriefs Vol. 4 No. 1 revealed the following data²⁰:

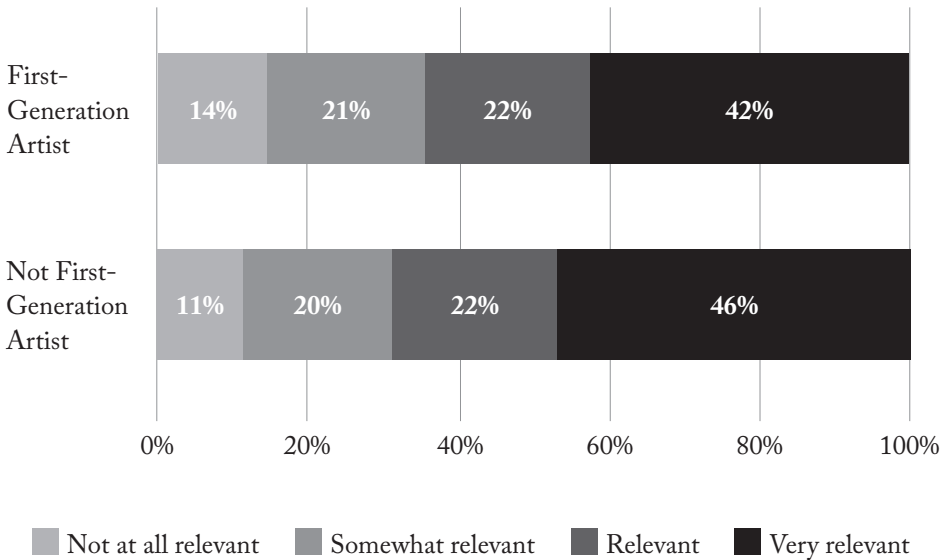
¹⁷ Dey, F. (2019, March 19). *Life purpose reconsidered* | Farouk Dey | TEDxJHUUC. [Www.ted.com. https://www.ted.com/talks/farouk_dey_life_purpose_reconsidered?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/farouk_dey_life_purpose_reconsidered?language=en)

¹⁸ Morgan, Z., Frenette, A., Gaskill, S., & Miller, A. (2015). *Spotlight on first-generation artists (part 1)* – SNAAP. SNAAP Data Brief Vol. 8 No. 3. Retrieved February 20, 2023, from <https://snaaparts.org/uploads/downloads/Data-Briefs/SNAAP-DataBrief-Vol3-No8.pdf>

¹⁹ Frenette, A., Martin, N., & Tepper, S. J. (2019, August). *Arts Graduates “Oscillate Wildly” Across Disciplines*. SNAAP DataBriefs. Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://snaaparts.org/uploads/downloads/Data-Briefs/SNAAP-DataBrief-Vol7-No2.pdf>

²⁰ Morgan, Z., with Frenette, A., Gaskill, S., & Miller, A. (2016). *Spotlight on first-generation artists (part 2)* – snaaparts.org. DataBriefs Volume 4 Number 1. Retrieved March 7, 2023, from <https://snaaparts.org/uploads/downloads/Data-Briefs/SNAAP-DataBrief-Vol4-No1.pdf>

Relevance of arts training to current work



SNAAP DataBrief

Volume 4 Number 1

Spotlight on First-Generation Artists (PART 2)

Figure 1, Relevance of arts training to current work

One can add experiential learning, internships, and study abroad to Ann Amacucci’s list of terms first generation students need to learn and understand. Many of us can remember the traditional “formula” of the end of the second year or junior year for global education, i.e., a semester, year, or short-term period of a life-enhancing experience. Study Abroad is a perfect example — how do first generation and ESL students learn about those opportunities early — so that they may plan and begin “lobbying” with their extended family or others for the support they will need? In weekly experiences working with the CU Denver Office of International Affairs, many first-year students are interested in Study Abroad during/after their first year of classes and enroll for 3-week Maymester sessions. These are examples of “high-impact practices” (HIP) which George Kuh and others have written about. This is elaborated on in the *Journal of Arts, Management, Law, and Society* (an article by Angie Miller, Nathan Miller, and Alexandre Frenette), on HIPs and artistic careers (using SNAAP data).²¹

²¹ Miller, A. L., Martin, N. D., & Frenette, A. (2022). Unpacking high-impact practices in the arts: Predictors of college, career, and Community Engagement Outcomes. *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, 52(3), 190–210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632921.2022.2029786>

Seeking inspiration through curiosity

In the broadest context, Farouk Dey urges students (and their professors) to stop contemplating the useless question, “*What should I do with my life?*” He encourages students to seek inspiration instead and engage with others. Join a community. Engage in an experience that aligns with their curiosity. Ask someone to be a mentor and pay attention to every moment of inspiration. Dr. Dey tells students, “*And when that (inspiration) happens, know that this is your time to make a bold decision and an audacious move that could change the rest of your life. Moreover, every time you feel the urge to have a plan, remember this: life’s purpose cannot be planned or predicted. It is lured out of hiding with the help of mentors and the right mindset.*”²²

This paper has some specificity for the performing arts, but a broad array of the arts are included in the context of college major choices and career decisions. With numerous societal, cultural, and economic changes — equity, diversity, and inclusion bring awareness of the many potentials for enriching artistic and creative experiences. First generation performing arts students can seek minority organizations like the African American Shakespeare Company,²³ the nation’s premier Asian American theater East West Players (they created the 51% Preparedness Plan for the American Theatre in 2015 because American theater was not “prepared to welcome new audiences of diverse backgrounds”),²⁴ the popular Asian-American Colorado Dragon Boat Film Festival,²⁵ the highly visible Latin Music Center at Berklee College of Music,²⁶ are all examples of how first generation and minority students can, perhaps, “see themselves” in a relatable context.

Parents (and others) who influence students

Parents still exert influence over college majors and their children’s career choices.²⁷ As referenced previously, the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) DataBriefs provide arts educators, students, parents, and others with

²² Dey, F. (2019, March 19). *Life purpose reconsidered* | Farouk Dey | TEDxJHUDC. www.ted.com. https://www.ted.com/talks/farouk_dey_life_purpose_reconsidered?language=en

²³ *Mission – african-american shakespeare company*. African-American Shakespeare Company. (2017, December 4). Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://www.african-americanshakes.org/about/>

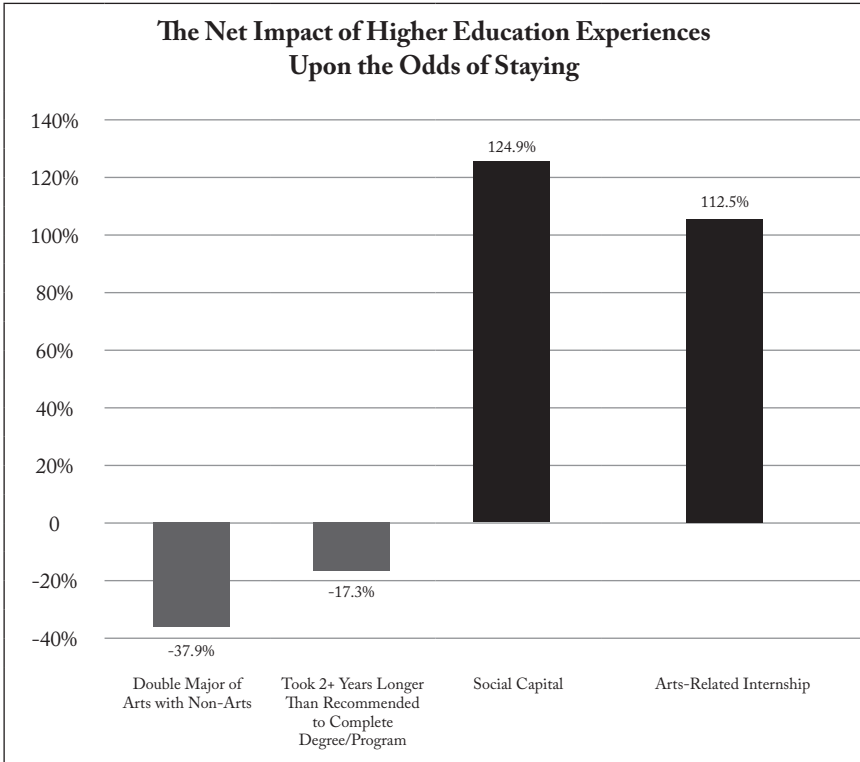
²⁴ *51% preparedness plan for the American Theatre*. East West Players. (2022, July 19). Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://eastwestplayers.org/preparedness-plan/>

²⁵ Colorado Dragon Boat Film Festival and the Denver Film Society. (2023). *2023 Colorado dragon boat film festival*. Visit Denver. Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://www.denver.org/event/2023-colorado-dragon-boat-film-festival/97125/>

²⁶ *Latin music studies*. Latin Music Studies | Berklee College of Music. (n.d.). Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://college.berklee.edu/focused/latin-music>

²⁷ Shirvell, B. (2023, January 19). *Parents can significantly influence their kids’ career choices, but that is not always good*. Parents. Retrieved January 31, 2023, from <https://www.parents.com/kids/development/parents-can-have-a-big-influence-on-their-kids-career-choice-but-thats-not-always-a-good-thing/>

highlights of SNAAP data and insights into the value of an education in the arts. Sociologist Alexandre Frenette of Vanderbilt University has written about who stays and who leaves careers in the arts — in the years after earning a postsecondary arts degree. Frenette cites earlier studies of students who take on double majors.²⁸



SNAAP Data Brief
Volume 7, Number 1

By the Numbers The Impact of Higher Education Experiences
on Who Stays and Who Leaves A Career in the Arts

The data cited by Frenette clearly shows that double majoring in arts with a non-arts primary (i.e., business, science, or other) only sometimes works out.²⁹ So that chart bursts the bubble of the famous “fallback” argument for a Double major that parents and well-intended extended family members often make.

²⁸ Frenette, A. (2019). *By the Numbers: The Impact of Higher Education Experiences on Who Stays and Who Leaves A Career in the Arts*. SNAAP Data Brief Volume 7 Number 1. Retrieved March 7, 2023, from <https://snaaparts.org/uploads/downloads/Data-Briefs/SNAAP-DataBrief-Vol7-No1.pdf>

²⁹ Frenette, A. (2017). Arts graduates in a changing economy. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 61(12), 1455–1462. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217747695>

The point here is that the advice of double majoring (to have a fallback) or, worse yet, the example of encouraging students to pursue a music education degree in case performing, composing, or other areas do not work out — are both misguided. The content of Frenette’s excellent research can be viewed alongside a book by David Epstein entitled *Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World*.³⁰ Epstein gives special attention to creatives and supports fostering characteristics of creative achievers and serial innovators. His characteristics include *broad curiosity/interests, love of reading/learning, ability to think in systems, proactively cross domains/disciplines, integrate/synthesize knowledge, willingness to embrace ambiguity, etc.*³¹

The emergence of the generalist

Frenette and Dowd provide research that reveals a new class of arts school graduates: “the generalists.” They shared that “*SNAAP survey data have long confirmed the intuition that double majors combining a major in the arts with one outside the arts are less likely to stay in the arts as a career, compared to respondents with only a single arts major. However, much less intuitively, compared to arts-based workers who are more prone to specialization, graduates who expand the number of artistic occupations in which they have worked (what we call “generalists”) are much more likely to stay in the arts.*”³²

Much of traditional arts training (primarily in various Western European styles) has been exacting, focused in a single area, and follows traditions throughout the centuries. SNAAP research encourages changing the narrative of “success” by reflecting on the available information and data of arts alumni. Respondents stressed the importance of understanding career outcomes in terms of traditional measures, such as employment and income. In contrast to other fields, however, participants noted a tendency (amongst some within arts and design fields) to see employment outside of these areas as not a successful career outcome.³³

Douglas Dempster, a founding member of the SNAAP board and former Dean of the College of Fine Arts, University of Texas at Austin, is a philosopher and professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance. He identifies a matter that holds back performing arts students: “*most faculty members in most arts schools have limited or little experience with the professional practices required of an artist*

³⁰ Epstein, D. J. (2021). *Range: Why generalists triumph in a Specialized World*. Riverhead Books.

³¹ Kowalski, K. (2023, January 17). *Ten generalist insights from “Range” by David Epstein*. Sloww. Retrieved February 20, 2023, from <https://www.sloww.co/range-david-epstein/#range-characteristics>

³² Frenette, A., Dowd, T., with Skaggs, R., & Ryan, T. (2020). *Careers in the arts: Who stays and who leaves?* SPECIAL REPORT: SPRING 2020. Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://snaaparts.org/findings/reports/careers-in-the-arts-who-stays-and-who-leaves>

³³ Frenette, A., Dowd, T., with Skaggs, R., & Ryan, T. (2020). *Careers in the arts: Who stays and who leaves?* SPECIAL REPORT: SPRING 2020. Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://snaaparts.org/findings/reports/careers-in-the-arts-who-stays-and-who-leaves>

*employed entirely outside the patronage of an educational organization.*³⁴ First generation students need role model artists and creators who have thrived in the areas of professional practice. Based on data, Dempster has championed student-centered, career-advancing curricular innovations as a leader in championing research and data — especially in professional practice and the acquisition of transferable skills.

The importance of entrepreneurship

In another SNAAP Data Brief, Researchers Wen Guo and David McGraw used their research in arts “skill preparation” (what Dempster references as “professional practice”) to provide important questions. Their research examines how to offer training in both the arts and arts entrepreneurship without creating financial barriers to careers in the arts. They pose these important questions:

- Can more arts entrepreneurship training be included in arts curricula to reduce the need for additional tuition? Can institutions provide internship structures that encourage and support entrepreneurial experience?
- The offerings and support are available to first-generation college students and students who do not come from arts-focused families. Can institutions provide guidance and examples of long-term careers in the arts? Can institutions increase networking opportunities tailored explicitly to arts students?³⁵

Careers in the arts have never been more diverse. Still, many opinions exist about how people define jobs, the emergence of the contingent (gig) economy, and lingering perceptions of “the starving” artist. There are many examples of this, and Steven J. Tepper wrote, “*we are victims of what psychologists call cognitive bolstering. We tend to note examples that confirm our preexisting ideas. The suffering artist “story” is so pervasive that we pay attention only to examples that confirm the myth.*”³⁶

Conclusion

In summation, the data tells us that first generation students in the arts face unique challenges. Research suggests that *affluent parents distinguish their children’s college experiences from those of peers, extending “effectively maintained*

³⁴ Dempster, D. J. (2017). Concluding remarks: Policy implications for postsecondary arts education. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 61(12), 1589–1594. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217742221>

³⁵ Guo, W., & McGraw, D. (2022). *How Does Skill Preparation in Higher Education and its Cost Influence Alumni’s Entrepreneurship Career Choice?* DataBriefs Vol. 10 No. 4. Retrieved February 20, 2023, from <https://snaaparts.org/findings/databriefs/skill-preparation-in-higher-education-and-its-cost-influence-alumni-entrepreneurship-career-choice>

³⁶ Tepper, S. J. (2011, July 27). Uncle Henry is wrong. There is a lot you can do with that degree. HuffPost. Retrieved January 31, 2023, from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/uncle-henry-is-wrong-ther_b_868279

*inequality” beyond the K-12 education. Universities may be receptive of these efforts due to funding shifts that make recruiting affluent, out-of-state families desirable.*³⁷ Farouk Dey provides direction for students to ask, “*What happens when you replace the question “where do you see yourself in the future?” with the more productive question “what are you curious about today?”*, and create ways for learners to experiment with their curiosity, take risks, and connect with people who can help them turn their imagined ideas into prototypes, audacious moves, and ultimately fulfilled lives?”³⁸ The SNAAP surveys and Databriefs align with Dey’s statements and advance his beliefs in examples such as advising students not to plan the next 20 years in advance, but that “*people who open themselves to new experiences thrive. They take risks and make “audacious moves.”*”³⁹ This affirms Steven J. Tepper’s identification of cognitive bolstering in the form of people like “Uncle Henry” who provide advice based on symbolic stories and tales. A poignant example is that Leonard Bernstein’s father, Samuel, refused to pay for his son’s piano lessons. After Bernstein’s famous last-minute debut in Carnegie Hall on November 14, 1943, some reporters challenged Sam about his reluctance to encourage his son’s musical career. Sam famously replied, “*Well, how was I supposed to know he would turn out to be Leonard Bernstein?*”⁴⁰ That story (while humorous) is poignant to the extreme. Leonard Bernstein was a first generation student (his parents immigrated from Ukraine) and a minority (Jewish).⁴¹

³⁷ Hamilton, L., Roksa, J., & Nielsen, K. (2018). Providing a “leg up”: Parental involvement and opportunity hoarding in college. *Sociology of Education*, 91(2), 111–131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040718759557>

³⁸ Dey, F. (2023, January 11). *Farouk Dey on linkedin: #leadership #imaginejhu #imaginejhu #highered #lifedesign...: 31 comments*. Farouk Dey on LinkedIn: #leadership #imaginejhu #imaginejhu #highered #lifedesign... | 31 comments. Retrieved March 3, 2023, from <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7018984876703973376/>

³⁹ Dey, F. (2023, January 11). *Farouk Dey on linkedin: #leadership #imaginejhu #imaginejhu #highered #lifedesign...: 31 comments*. Farouk Dey on LinkedIn: #leadership #imaginejhu #imaginejhu #highered #lifedesign... | 31 comments. Retrieved March 3, 2023, from <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7018984876703973376/>

⁴⁰ Bernstein, J. (2007, December 19). Being Bernstein. Playbill. Retrieved January 31, 2023, from <https://www.playbill.com/article/being-bernstein>

⁴¹ Foster, A. (1951). *America’s Disadvantaged Minorities: The American Jew*. The Journal of Negro Education. Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i349056>

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Laurence (Larry) Kaptain is Special Assistant to the Provost at the University of Colorado Denver. After 16 years of deaning at three different institutions, he is transitioning to the faculty in the College of Arts & Media. As a recording artist (percussionist and cimbalom), he may be heard with numerous North American and European Orchestras, and a recording with Orpheus that was a Grammy Winner, in 2001. He holds a DMA in percussion from the University of Michigan and currently serves on the boards of the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP), the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts, and Opera Colorado. A former Fulbright Scholar (and avid internationalist) he is co-leading a Study Abroad trip to Nepal that will have a generalist focus on arts, design, and meditation — with special attention given to the work and life of Tibetan artist Tenzing Rigdol, a CU Denver alum (BFA, '05 and HD, '22).

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The *Journal of Performing Arts Leadership in Higher Education* (JPALHE), published once a year, presents a wide range of topics relevant to visionary leadership in the performing arts in higher education. Topics include, but are not limited to, curriculum development, assessment, goal setting, career preparation, governance, fund raising, technology, retention and recruitment. As a peer-reviewed journal, JPALHE presents articles that are supported by facts and cited appropriately, using the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian. Articles for consideration are submitted electronically to the editor and must be in the 12-point font of Times New Roman, double-spaced and no longer than 12 pages. The author's name must not appear on the attached article. Submissions from all countries are welcome, although the journal is published in English. Authors are responsible for securing all copyright clearance.

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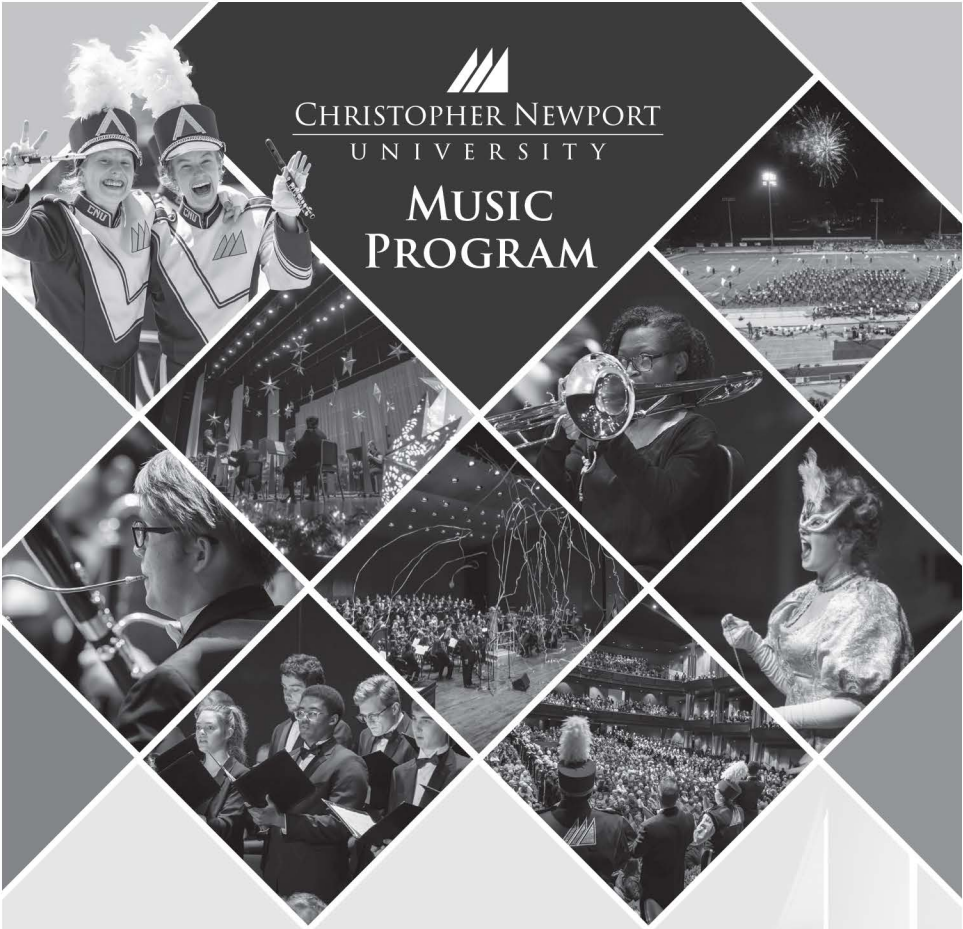
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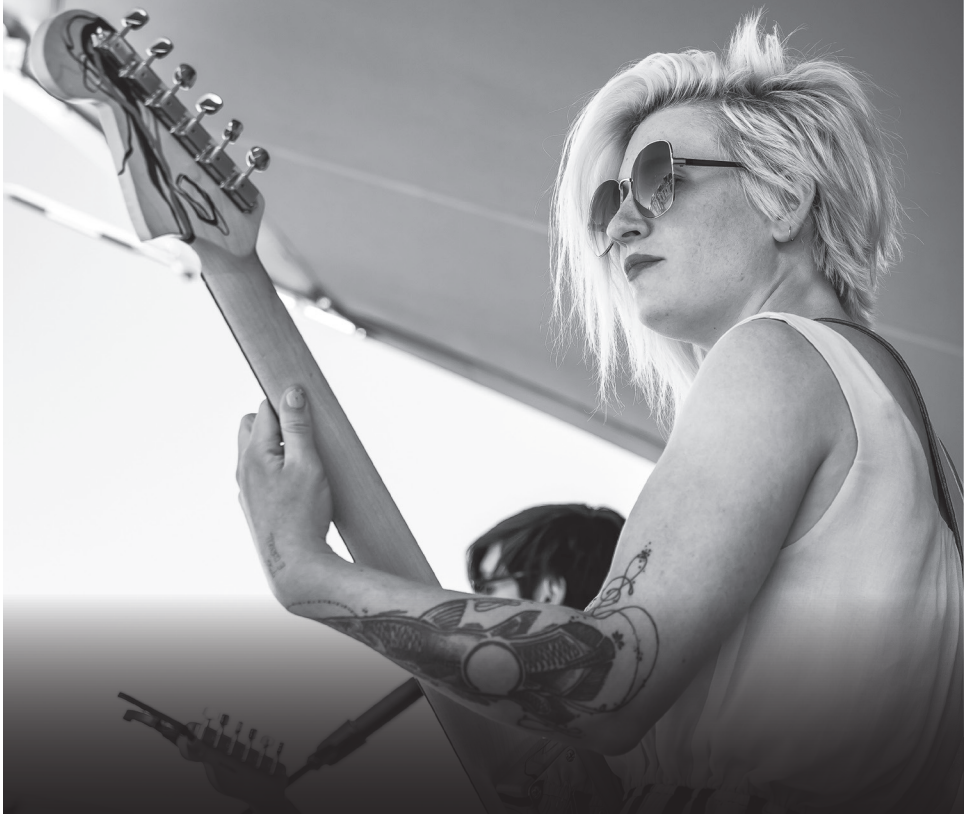
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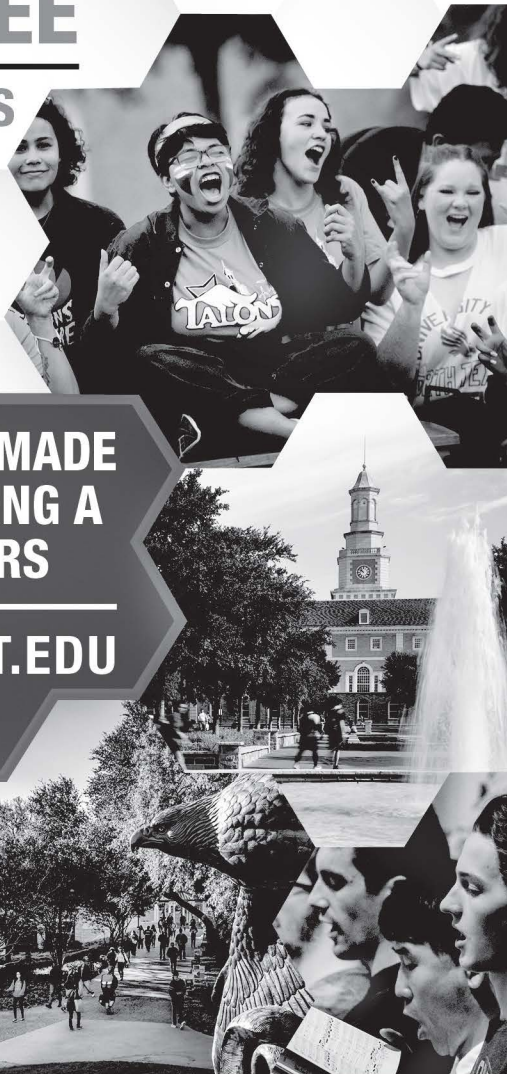
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